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TO BOLDLY GO BEYOND

STAR WARS THEME PARK

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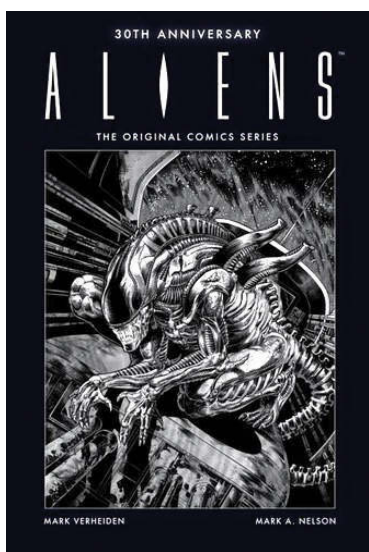
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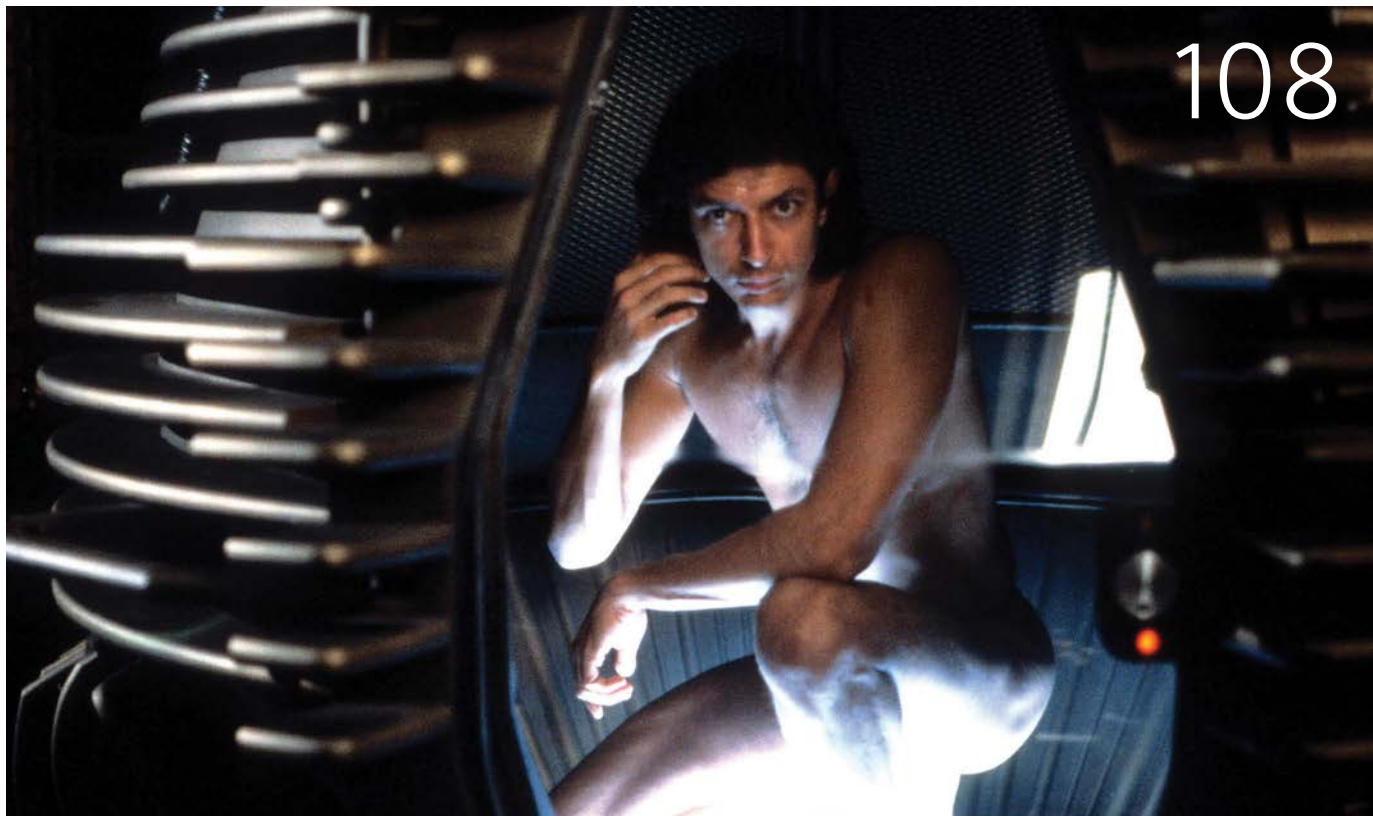
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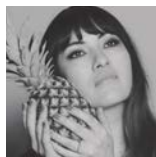
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MILES GUTTERY

What Miles doesn't know about classic TV shows and movies could be recorded onto a C5 cassette. It would probably get mangled in the tape deck though.



CLAIRE LIM

She's such a geek we just had to give Claire her own opinion column. You can also hear her talk about geek stuff in the new Geeky Monkey podcast.



JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan is the author of *Anime: A History, and Modern Japan*. He writes the Manga Snapshot column for NEO magazine.



JOHN HOULIHAN

His Houliness: writer, game designer, sci-fi, fantasy and horror lover, author of the Seraph books and ex editor-in-chief of CVG.com.



DEAN MORTLOCK

Dean is our tech writer, and has been writing about shiny, techy things since even before you can imagine. He's also the editor of Widecreen Magazine.



HUGH DAVID

Hugh is a Media and Education Consultant; anime and film writer, and a former marketer in the film and home entertainment industry.



GEMMA COX

Gemma has been editor of our sister magazine, the Japanese lifestyle and culture bible that is NEO, for the last ten years.



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

A horror film obsessive and life-long comic book reader, Michael also contributes to FSM magazine and is not averse to silly photos.



ROB BURMAN

Rob is the editor of Tabletop Gaming Magazine and, after a childhood Top Trumps incident, is on a life quest to find the greatest board games ever.



JEM ROBERTS

Jem is an author, storyteller, comedy historian, performer and magazine man, with official books on Blackadder and Douglas Adams.



WELCOME...

Don't you just love a good ComicCon? You never know who you're going to bump into, as my photo above proves. It's great to see so much enthusiasm for geek culture on display. The incredible effort that goes into making the best cosplay costumes (check out Harley Quinn on page 58), the array of bizarre geeky goodies on show (I love my new Millennium Falcon umbrella) and the celebrities. I've got a laptop full of great interviews to bring you over coming issues, starting off this month chatting with Jeremy Bulloch, Boba Fett himself.

Our cover this issue is a tribute to the best sci-fi double act of all time – Kirk and Spock. In our Star Trek feature on page eight we explore what the franchise needs to get right in going 'Beyond' to the new TV series and movie.

We've been rereading the groundbreaking science fiction of John Wyndham and give our opinion on the TV and movie adaptations starting on page 40.

You can read by interview with Mark Cordory on page 96 – to quote him, "he makes stuff". The stuff he's made you will have definitely seen – Doctor Who, Torchwood and Knightmare have all felt the heat of Mark's gluegun.

Thanks for all the kind words about the magazine and our new podcast on iTunes – keep the feedback coming through Facebook, Twitter, or using your HAL 9000.

Nick Roberts

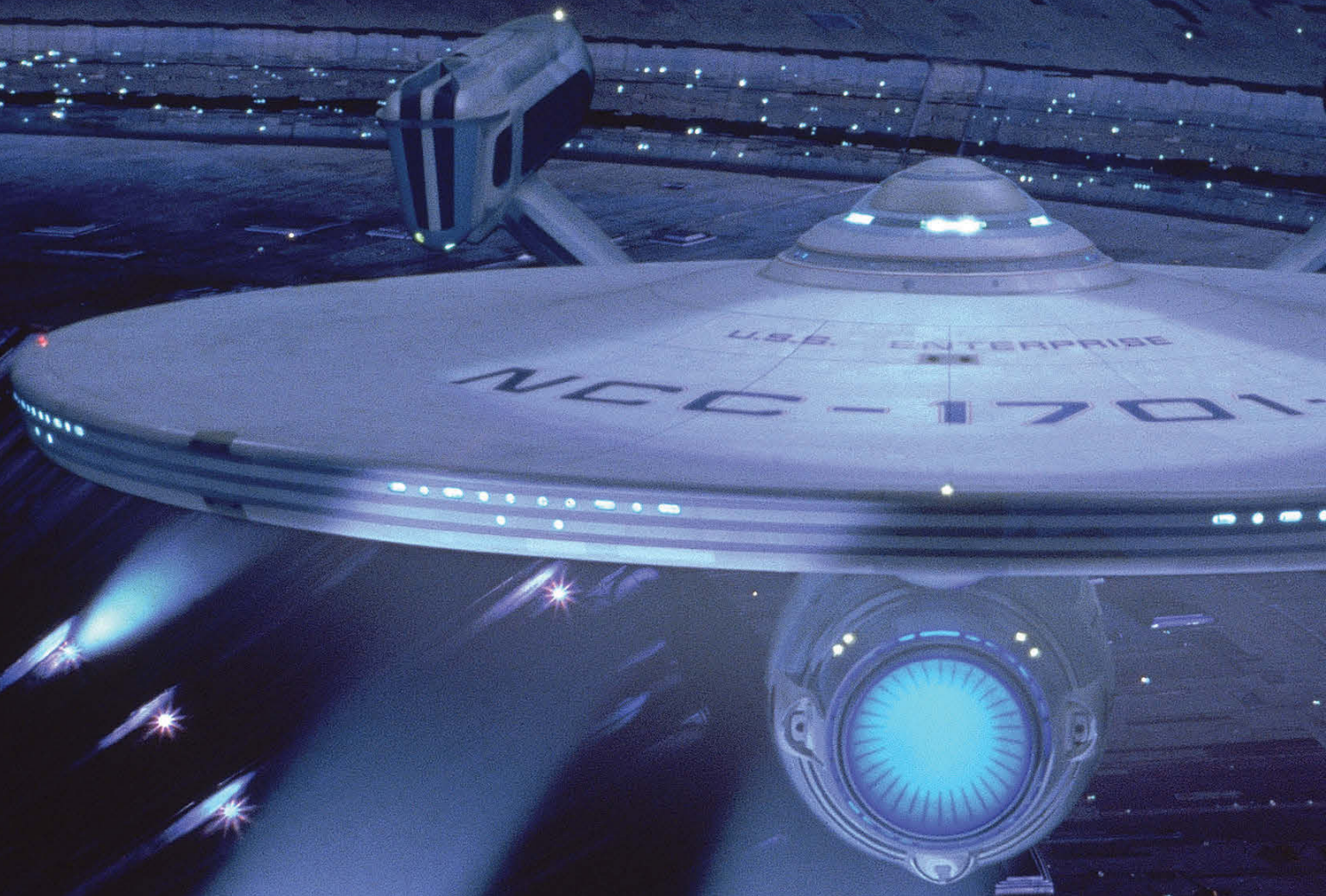
NICK ROBERTS
EDITOR



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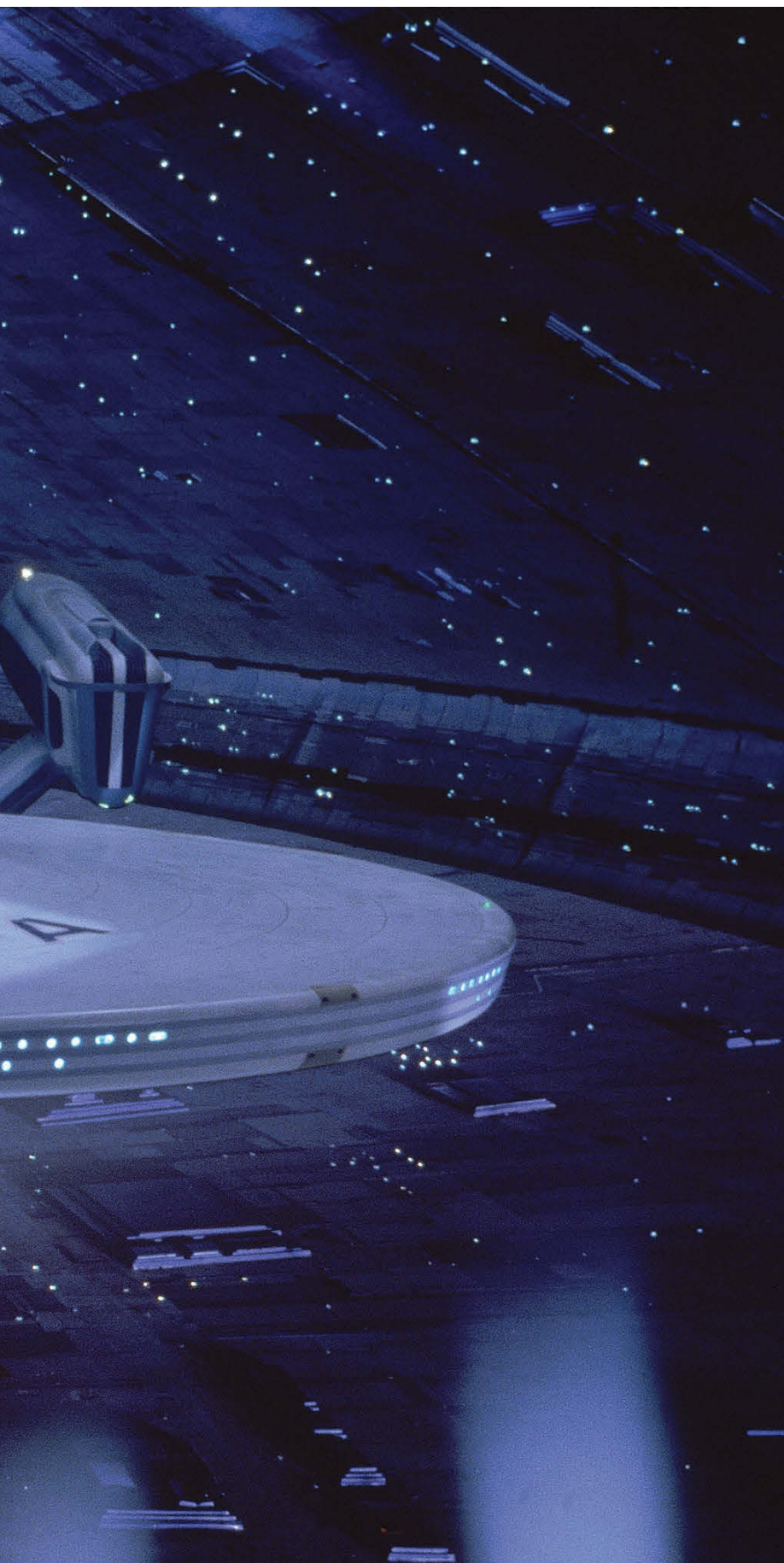
STAR TREK TO BOLDLY GO BEYOND

AS STAR TREK TURNS 50 AND MOVES BEYOND THE MOVIE REBOOTS BACK INTO SERIAL TELEVISION, WE LOOK AT WHAT SCIENCE FICTION'S BIGGEST, BOLDEST BRAND SHOULD BE DOING TO BOTH HONOUR ITS STORIED PAST AND BOLDLY GO INTO ITS FRANCHISE FUTURE...



Words: RICH MATTHEWS

Rich is the former Senior Editor of The Official Star Trek, Star Wars and Smallville magazines, currently writer for BAFTA and Marvel Fact Files.



“STAR TREK WAS AN ATTEMPT TO SAY THAT HUMANITY WILL REACH MATURITY AND WISDOM ON THE DAY THAT IT BEGINS NOT JUST TO TOLERATE, BUT TAKE A SPECIAL DELIGHT IN DIFFERENCES IN IDEAS, AND DIFFERENCES IN LIFE FORMS. IF WE CANNOT LEARN TO ACTUALLY ENJOY THOSE SMALL DIFFERENCES, TO TAKE A POSITIVE DELIGHT IN THOSE SMALL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR OWN KIND, HERE ON THIS PLANET, THEN WE DO NOT DESERVE TO GO OUT INTO SPACE AND MEET THE DIVERSITY THAT IS ALMOST CERTAINLY OUT THERE.”

GENE RODDENBERRY

Star Trek is fun. That’s an unusual place to start when writing about why Star Trek is Good, Great and Important after 50 years of cultural impact, but have no illusions – if Star Trek wasn’t fun it would have boldly gone to the starship junkyard even before CBS started its perennial threats of cancellation during its original run in the late 1960s.

Starting with the word fun is controversial even among Trekkies, with many slating the trailer for the latest JJverse film, Star Trek Beyond, by describing it as ‘only fun’. Yes, the series had cultural impact, dramatic integrity, TV’s first interracial kiss, fictional technology that came to pass and an optimistic view of the future – but none of those things would get anybody to don a bumpy Klingon forehead IN PUBLIC and be PROUD of it. No, people do that for the joy, the collective glee and the sheer unadulterated fun of Star Trek.

What’s not to enjoy? Spaceships. Lasers. Bright colours. Aliens. SEXY aliens. Epic themes. Mythic storytelling. Big ideas. Gripping characters. Charismatic actors. Witty repartee. Transporter beams, photo torpedoes, food replicators, tricorders... I’m getting giddy just trying to summarise. It’s the fun that draws you in. Then it gets its meaty, allegorical hooks into your brain and before you know it, Star Trek’s themes, characters and stories have embellished your life. They ►



“THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KIRK, SPOCK AND BONES WAS SOMETHING THAT BRENT AND PATRICK AND I STRIVED FOR YEARS TO FIND SOME PORTION OR SHADE OR FACET OF”

JONATHAN FRAKES

become part of who you are. Once that happens, there's no going back. You are a Trekker. Forever. You go back and watch the 700-plus hours of TV. You watch the films. You read the books. You attend a convention. You may even buy a uniform. That's why this is only Star Trek's first 50th anniversary. So why?

PEOPLE AND PLACE

First and foremost, anything set in space is cool. Star Trek, birthed in the era of the space race between the US and USSR, was the first pop culture show to truly take advantage of that facet of our Earthbound psyche. There were plenty of serious films (Forbidden Planet), trashy monster movies (It Came From Outer Space) or campy combinations of both (Lost in Space), but Star Trek was different. It took its science fiction seriously but kept its cool by putting technology, humanity's quest to better itself and space exploration front and centre, neatly undercut by humour and a healthy streak of camp (remember the space hippies?).

“I always felt, and this is something of a cliché, that it's Gene Roddenberry's original vision of a hopeful future that has kept Star Trek alive,” says Jonathan Frakes, who played Commander William T. Riker on *The Next Generation*, as well as directing the movies *First Contact* and *Insurrection*, and dozens of episodes. “I used to talk in terms of how rough it was in Ireland when we first started *The Next Generation* in the 80s and 90s, then it was the wall coming down in East Berlin. Now it's the horrific jihadist behaviour of Isis. Through whatever scares the shit out of everybody in the world, we have Star Trek, with its vision of a

world in which people are civilised to each other and treat each other with respect. It's as simple as that.”

With that optimistic yet allegorical examination of humanity in place as their backdrop, Roddenberry (and thus all Star Trek going forward) populated his fictional universe with recognisable archetypes: the emotional, charismatic ladies' man (Kirk), the logical man of science (Spock), the impassioned, bleeding heart physician (McCoy) and the overburdened miracle-working Scottish engineer (Scotty). Once they lobbed in some hip 60s-era taboo breakers – a Japanese helmsman (WWII prejudice was still fresh in America's psyche), a Russian Monkees wannabe (at the height of the Cold War), and a black female officer (America was still riven by racism) – Star Trek struck an immediate, resonant, witty chord with the young of America, then the world. A chord that each successive iteration of the franchise strives to strike.

“The quality of the characters and the great actors don't hurt, especially the first three on the original show,” says Frakes. “The relationship between Kirk, Spock and Bones was something that Brent (Spiner, as android Pinocchio Lt Commander Data) and Patrick and I strived for years to find some portion or shade or facet of. That sort of ironic, sarcastic, loving, taking-the-piss-out-of-each-other relationship was at the core of it.”

TIME FOR A REFIT

The real moment of truth for Star Trek as we now know it came in 1986 when Paramount started developing a new television series (again). Up to this point Star Trek was Kirk, Spock and the crew of the ►





If you're not up on your Star Trek timelines, you will be interested to learn that The Next Generation starts in the year 2364 - 100 years after the original series.

BEST OF THE BEST

BEING A FORMER EDITOR OF THE OFFICIAL STAR TREK MAGAZINE, RICH MATTHEWS KNOWS A THINK OR TWO ABOUT A GOOD TREK STORY. HERE IS HIS PICK...

[1966-1969]

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES

The City On The Edge of Forever [s1, ep28] Would you risk your own future to save Joan Collins? Kirk almost did - and created epic, poetic sci-fi.

Space Seed [s1, ep22] One word: Khaaaaaaaaan! A contemplation of genetic engineering decades before most of us even heard the term 'stem cell'.

Balance of Terror [s1, ep14]: This episode is the perfect template for Star Trek's model of a space battle, against classic shadowy villains the Romulans.

[1973-1974]

STAR TREK: THE ANIMATED SERIES

Yesteryear [s1, ep2] Spock travels through time to save his younger self. Not only is this good sci-fi and great Star Trek, but it gave JJ Abrams his 'Spock being bullied by other Vulcan kids' scene.

Mudd's Passion [s1, ep10] Harry Mudd is a beloved comic Trek villain and his gleeful animated bow - hocking a love potion to miners on a planet called Motherlode - is a hoot.

The Time Trap [s1, ep12] Initially undervalued, this Enterprise crew working with Klingons to get out of an interstellar Bermuda Triangle is actually a geek nirvana of references.

[1979-2016]

STAR TREK MOVIES

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan [1982] By FAR the best Star Trek movie of all time, this sequel to Space Seed transcends the franchise to become great cinema. Period. And they kill Spock. Sob.

Star Trek VI: The Voyage Home [1986] Time travel, Kirk and Spock in 1986, and whales. Funniest Star Trek ever.

Star Trek: First Contact [1996] Perhaps the darkest Trek flick, Jonathan Frakes' time-travelling Borg action horror is the high point of The Next Generation, on any screen.



original enterprise. They were the franchise. But that cast were still up on the silver screen, saving whales. “They had already thought about recasting Kirk, Spock and McCoy,” says Star Trek consultant and author Larry Nemecek. “In fact, there’s been a 20-year cycle in 66, 86 and then 06. It was the 1986 decision to go in another direction that really expanded the paradigm of Star Trek. The Next Generation was so great because it broke the mould by being a sequel and building on what went before. Once you had Next Generation, which embraced Kirk, Spock and McCoy but was 80 years down the road, we were in a new sandbox.”

The huge success of the new ‘made for syndication’ crew – led by Shakespearean actor Patrick Stewart as Jean-Luc Picard, or, as Frakes calls him, “Old baldy! Captain Picard: the wackiest nut in the galaxy!” – emboldened new franchise mavens Rick Berman and Michael Piller (Roddenberry was out by season

two) to spin-off from their spin-off. They stepped further away from the original template and expanded the universe to a space station on the fringes of a wormhole to an unknown part of space in Deep Space Nine. What’s also notable is that DS9, with its wars, religious clashes and planetary occupations, significantly veered away from Roddenberry’s peachy-keen utopia. When Berman and Co spun-off again, back onto a starship, Voyager took a lot of that darker baggage to an even farther-flung unexplored corner of the galaxy. By the time they got round to their third spin-off, there was a definite sense that Enterprise, being a prequel to the original series, was too dark, a contributing factor to its ultimate ‘failure’, aka the much-disputed ‘franchise fatigue’. Yet, as Frakes said, surely Star Trek has to reflect the times? By the time they reached cinemas in the mid-90s, even The Next Generation were a darker reflection of their more naive, Roddenberry-led first season. ►

[1987-1994]

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

The Best of Both Worlds [s3, ep26; s4 ep1] The moment Picard, Riker, Data and Co moved out of Kirk, Spock and McCoy’s shadow – thanks in no small part to the franchise’s most durable villain, Borg.

Yesterday’s Enterprise [s3, ep15] Technically an alternate-reality episode, this is Star Trek in its purest science fiction form – and is brilliant.

All Good Things [s7, ep26] Next Gen went out knowing its first feature was close, so they were free to do a conceptual episode that explored Picard more than any other Captain.

[1993-1999]

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

The Visitor [s4, ep2] High-minded sci-fi at its best, with an in-flux Sisko visiting his son in brief flashes over his life. Sad, intellectually rigorous and quintessential.

Far Beyond The Stars [s6, ep13] Star Trek has a long history of showing its actors playing other ‘people’ and this 50s-set story of pulp science fiction writers is beautifully realised.

Little Green Men [s4, ep8] The aliens at Roswell were Ferengis Quark, Rom and Nog. Hysterical in all senses and a wonderfully inventive twist on conspiracy theorist history.

[1995-2001]

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Scorpion [s3, ep26; s4, ep1] The Borg hit the Delta Quadrant in style with the arrival of series sexpot Seven of Nine (played in super tight spandex by the pneumatic Jeri Ryan). One of my most favourite episodes!

Year of Hell [s4, eps8 & 9] Voyager at its bleakest, blackest best, stranded for a year in a section of space with no stars.

Endgame [s7, ep26] The series finale divided Trekkers but it cannily distils the themes and character dynamics of seven years into one temporally tricky 44 minutes.

[2002]

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE

Zero Hour [s3, ep24] This finale to the Xindi War arc embodies the whole series – exciting and interesting but lumbered with a tendency to undermine itself at the last second.

In A Mirror, Darkly [s4, eps18 & 19] This two-part mirror universe prequel is so incredibly self-reflexive and bound up in canon noodling that it is a wonder for the die-hard canonistas.

Similitude [s3, ep10] Cloning allegory refined – after Trip Tucker becomes comatose Dr Phlox grows a new Trip to harvest its organs to save the mortally wounded real engineer.



“As a director, in general you need to worry about the story and tone in a much broader sense than you do when you’re playing a character,” says Frakes. “If I had any success it was because I continued to pepper in some comedy. One of the reasons that First Contact was so successful was because there were moments that made you smile. It was a very serious movie, it was like a horror movie, but there were moments that lightened you up so that you restart the serious drama.”

FAN-TASTIC FAN-TASY

If we’re all honest, the only reason that 50 years on Star Trek is thriving is because of those who watch it. And there are no other fans of anything as devoted as Trekkers. No amount of Potterheads, Twiehard

or Mockingjays come close. Even Star Wars fans pale next to their perennial stellar precursor. Before Star Trek, and the infamous letter writing campaign that ultimately resulted in the development of Star Trek Phase 2 a decade after the original (which became The Motion Picture following the blockbuster effect of Star Wars in 1977), only pop bands generated the same breed of collective mania. They may have been mocked for decades, but the Star Trek conventions that first sprung up in the late 60s were the model for the ComicCons of today. Trekkers were the first geeks in the modern sense, the first to demonstrate fan power, and the first to get access to the subject of their devotion when stars of the show started making appearances.

The cynic in us recognises that devotion equals money. While it’s the quality of the shows and movies that makes each successive ►

INTERGALACTIC TURKEYS

STAR TREK DIDN’T ALWAYS GET IT RIGHT – HERE IS FIVE EXAMPLES OF STAR TREK THAT EVEN THE TREKKERS LOVE TO HATE...

[TV SERIES, THE ORIGINAL SERIES, 1968] SPOCK’S BRAIN

Some aliens steal Spock’s brain. AND HE LIVES! Given that he later downloads his ‘katra’ (aka consciousness) into McCoy AND LIVES (well, dies, is regenerated by the genesis wave, ages fast with the planet, gets rescued by Kirk, then has his mind put back by Dame Judith Anderson in time for the end of credits of The Search For Spock), being a Vulcan looks pretty damn fantastic.

[MOVIE, 1989] STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER

Spock was a good director, so Kirk had to be even better, right? Wrong. This search for God (literally) brings in a hammy brother for Spock, cringeworthy jokes (the famed triptych singing “Row, Row, Row” while eating beans around the campfire), poor effects (it was the first time without ILM), and poor writing (Scotty and Uhura getting smoochy?!). Still considered one of the worst Trek films.

[TV SERIES, THE NEXT GENERATION, 1989] SHADES OF GREY

For a series that became famous for its fantastic end-of-season cliffhangers that delighted fans, it’s amazing that they ended season two with a clip show of Riker’s ‘memories’ fighting off an alien disease. There are reasons (budget shortfalls, limited time) but this is easily one of the most redundant hours of television ever chucked out under the Trek banner.



[STAR TREK: INTRO DARKNESS] EVEN RECREATED THE FAMOUS, ICONIC DEATH OF SPOCK, ONLY OFFING KIRK INSTEAD. BY REBOOTING KHAN, THEY ALIENATED THE FAITHFUL.

**[TV SERIES, ENTERPRISE, 2005]
THESE ARE THE VOYAGES...**

With the new Star Trek series cresting on the far-off horizon (somewhere in 2017), this series finale for Enterprise will no longer be the last hour of TV Trek. Cause for celebration because it royally pissed off the faithful by portraying the whole series as a holodeck simulation run by Riker on The Next Generation. And they killed Trip. The boing was heard all the way to the Delta Quadrant.

**[MOVIE, 2013]
STAR TREK: INTO DARKNESS**

Voted the WORST Star Trek film ever at the 2013 Vegas convention. Too dark (terrorism directly depicted) and too revisionist (latino superman Ricardo Montalban became Englishman Benedict Cumberbatch), it even recreated the famous, iconic death of Spock, only offing Kirk instead. By rebooting Khan, they alienated the faithful. And people who like good storytelling.

FIVE C'S OF STAR TREK

Larry Nemecek, The Star Trek author, interviewer, editor, commentator, consultant, producer, event wrangler and self-confessed 'canonista', has his own formula for what makes Gene Roddenberry's space wagon train so successful...

"At the risk of being too clever or too cute," smiles Trek guru Nemecek, "a couple of years ago it hit me that the concepts I would go to when I talked about Star Trek wound up being the Five C's of Star Trek: Concept, Characters, Cast, Canon and Commentary. These are the key ingredients. Here's how they break down..."

1 // CONCEPT

"A sci-fi future with some distance from us – a hopeful future, not a dystopia or post-apocalypse, 23rd-24th-Century optimistic. We haven't killed ourselves (or Earth), boldly going forwards. The human adventure of Star Trek lies in the 700-plus hours of storytelling. That's where the spirit of exploration exists."

2 // CHARACTERS

"On the original show – Kirk, Spock, McCoy. Then every iteration since – Picard, Data, Riker, Troi. All down the line – Janeway, Cisco, Archer, all of them. For the most part are interesting, well-drawn characters that are very effectively used against the Star Trek background. The first, best destiny of Star Trek is as a series for unique characters who are evolving, encountering problems, different plots, different threads, with commentary on technology and, in a deeper way, on society, holding up the mirror, watching actors become invested in those characters, and then be interested in promoting that series over a long haul by going out and doing appearances and conventions."

3 // CAST

"Star Trek has been blessed with amazing actors. Not necessarily big names, but actors who brought something to it. Of the five lead captains the only one who was famous when they were cast was Scott Bakula (from Quantum Leap). Everyone else may have been known in their niche – like Patrick Stewart being a well-known Shakespearean actor for instance – but even Bill Shatner certainly wasn't big-big. This is also the strongest aspect of the JJ movies, it's a great cast that do justice to the original actors while also building their own take on the roles."

4 // COMMENTARY

"Doing morality tales that reflect society; not cramming it down your throat and not always precisely 'on the nose' but having that be a vibe in the mix. Gene Roddenberry's original driving force was to tell adult-themed stories that in the censored era of the 60s he might not be able to do on primetime television. He had just gotten burned with The Lieutenant being banned by ABC. He was smarting from that, so it was the censorship and the storytelling that drove him to do Star Trek as sci-fi, to sneak it by the censors and get it out to the audience."

4 // CANON

"Even within the show or the fandom people talk about the 'canonistas' or tech-heads. In each successive era, especially the JJ reboot, people get their panties in a wad about 'Oh, come on, just throw a ship out there and give me good stories, I don't care if they match up to the timeline!' To me, if you go back to the original memos between Gene, Bob Justman, Dorothy Fontana and Matt Jeffries, they were all about 'Let's come up with a list of all the ships before we make a mistake'. Gene realised that it had to be believable people in a believable situation that felt like they flowed from us, that they were our future. The Nth degree about making it believable was that if one week you turned down this corridor and there's a bathroom behind that door and the next week there's a rec room in there or a phaser room, it undermined the believability. Get that right and the human intention and drama is much more effective."



“WHEN ENTERPRISE WAS CANCELLED AND THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA WAS LIKE, ‘OH, STAR TREK IS DEAD’, I SAID THERE WAS NO WAY A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR FRANCHISE IS DEAD”

LARRY NEMECEK



Six television series, 12 movies and more books than we've read – the Enterprise was as much a star as Shatner or Nimoy.

generation hatch new Trekkies – the original series fans (first generation) begat the movies (second generation), which produced The Next Generation (third generation), which spawned three more series (fourth generation), and now new movies (the fifth) – it is the profit they bring that keeps the franchise alive. Space requires cash – in both reality and fiction.

“When Enterprise was cancelled and the mainstream media was like, ‘Oh, Star Trek is dead’, I said there was no way a multi-billion-dollar franchise is dead,” says Larry Nemecek, “especially in a cultural environment where things are brought back from the dead all the time. What is heartening is that in the last couple of years people have truly started to understand that we really won’t have Star Trek properly back until we have a series.” And we’ll have that series because the JJverse reboots made money. In fact, they’ve grossed a lot more box office receipts than their predecessors. As long as Star Trek makes money, it’ll live on. So in our nostalgia-hungry naval-gazing culture, Trek will always make a buck and have place on the slate, and thus in our lives. Thank Surak that it’s good!

However, on a final, fittingly optimistic note, if you look past the bottom line and the superficial fandom, Star Trek does make many people’s lives better.

“There are always people whose lives have been affected in a very dramatic way,” says Jonathan Frakes. “They’ve become doctors or astronauts or engineers, or their families were incredibly dysfunctional with the exception of the time they spent together watching Star Trek. I can think of a number of stories of recovering veterans who got through the trauma of war and injury by watching the show. It brings tears to your eyes. There are so many levels of pride and responsibility and gratefulness that comes from being there and listening to these people pour their hearts out to you about what this show has meant for them. It’s quite humbling and wonderful.”

Fascinating. Live long and prosper.

Paramount Pictures’ Star Trek Beyond will be in cinemas on 22 July. The new Star Trek TV series will be launched on CBS in the USA in January 2017, then move to CBS All Access.

Q&A

Jonathan Frakes

COMMANDER WILLIAM T RIKER ON
THE NEXT GENERATION AND DIRECTOR

Larry Nemecek

STAR TREK AUTHOR,
ACTOR, EDITOR AND PRODUCER

At time of writing Bryan Fuller was announced as showrunner of the new Star Trek. We asked Jonathan Frakes and Larry Nemecek for their reaction and what they would do if they were running the show...

When asked about the direction any new series of Star Trek should take, Jonathan Frakes stated...

"You have to be true to Roddenberry's vision and the Prime Directive. Personally, I'd like to see it explore the universe we [The Next Generation] worked in, but I don't know if they can do that. But even if it's in the Kirk universe of JJ's movies, Bryan Fuller is a good choice."

Larry Nemecek is also pleased that Fuller has come onboard.

"I am thrilled," **he says**. "I knew that Bryan had been actively pitching ideas over the last couple of years, and had put it out into the public domain that he wanted to do it. He's got to a place in his career, after Pushing Daisies and Hannibal, that he's in a comfort zone in his own skin that he can come back and do Star Trek without any baggage. He's going to do a great job."

However, like Frakes, Nemecek would like to see the new show stick with the pre-reboot 'Prime' universe.

"A new series that wasn't Prime would be a missed opportunity," Nemecek argues. "Even something like Star Wars has most of its canon in books and trading cards. With Star Trek, so much of it is onscreen – a huge, rich moving tapestry. You could even do a Klingon Game of Thrones-style series!"

Joking aside, Nemecek has pretty firm ideas about what he'd like the show to be.

"My personal favourite ideas are the founding of the Federation and the Romulan War," **he says**. "I had quibbles with how they started off Enterprise and people mix up the execution with the concept, but I was disappointed that they didn't show those two things. I would love to see what sent the Romulans back behind their photon curtain into seclusion for 50 years. I would love to see first contact with the Cardassians. I would even love to see April taking the Enterprise for the first time, 30 years



"WHEN THE WRITING'S GOOD, IT'S A REALLY EXCITING PROCESS. WHEN YOU'VE GOT A LAYERED SCENE AND WONDERFUL ACTORS PLAYING IT, THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT"

before Kirk. There are so many opportunities. Even if you go past Picard, Sisko and Janeway further into the future, there's the huge amount of story that has come from the STO online game that has become so popular. But there are issues about whether enough time has passed off-screen. With Next Gen, 80 years passed on-screen and 20 years off, so TV, culture and science went through enough changes to

expand the canvas again. Have we reached that point since Enterprise?"

What about the rumours floating around that CBS was considering doing a JJverse reboot of The Next Generation?

"When I heard the rumours about them recasting our cast, I immediately thought that of course Will Wheaton can play Riker!" **guffaws Frakes**. "He's got the beard now."

Nemecek is less amused than Picard's former right-hand man.

"Let's NOT. There are artful ways to work inside the canon."

As the director of one of the most successful and universally loved Star Trek films, First Contact, Frakes thinks the success of any new show will come down to two key factors – respecting the viewer and good writing.

"Never talk down to your audience or underestimate their intelligence. Even a small note to an actor informs their behaviour – it could change their physicality, their rhythm and affect the viewer's reaction. When the writing's good, it's a really exciting process. When you've got a layered scene and wonderful actors playing it, there's NOTHING like it. And Star Trek has had a much higher hit rate than a lot of shows."

Surely this experience makes Frakes an ideal candidate to jump onboard with Kurtzman, Fuller and the newly returned-to-the-fold Nicholas Meyer?

"I'm hoping to get on the show in some capacity, but there seems to be a reluctance to let anyone from Next Gen into the house," **he says**. "That was certainly the way with the first few movies. I count JJ as a friend and I'm a huge fan, but it's very hard to get employed in the new Star Trek world as a director."

Let's start the campaign here – get Jonathan Frakes on the new Star Trek show CBS. Come on, erm, boldly go with it!



1996-2016

POKÉMON 20TH ANNIVERSARY

SEVENTH GENERATION POKÉMON ANNOUNCED

On 25 February information was leaked that sent a fanatical section of the gaming community into semi-meltdown. Naysayers denounced it as hoax, everybody else crossed their fingers in hope. 24 hours later it was officially confirmed – a new set of Pokémon games, the seventh generation, will be launching on Nintendo 3DS this year. The announcement even dropped a trailer marking the 20th anniversary of the Japanese launch of Red and Green on the original Game Boy.

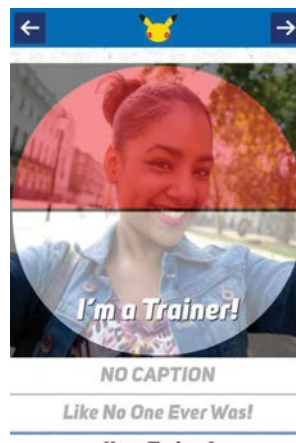
Other than confirmation of the titles – Sun and Moon – there's very little else to go on at the moment. The first minute and 43 seconds of the two minute trailer is simply a montage of gameplay footage from the previous six generations of Pokémon games. We then get a grand total of seven seconds of quick cuts showing various concept art. Naturally Pokémon fans have analysed this meagre ration of information in the minutest detail for any clues as to what to expect.

The result would seem to be that the location for Sun and Moon will be Hawaii. This is based on one location concept drawing showing a palm tree and lots of water, indicating a tropical environment, while another piece of art shows yellow fire engines, which they have in Hawaii. Other vehicle artwork shows rainbows on the license plates which again, you guessed it, is a Hawaiian thing, so get your grass skirts out!

At the time of writing there's only one press release on the matter, and it tells us basically nothing except that you'll be able to transfer captured Pokémon from the virtual console versions of Red, Blue and Yellow to the new game using Pokémon Bank. The only other piece of apparently solid evidence was a leaked list of new Pokémon that would allegedly appear in the game. Sadly this was rapidly debunked, so we'll just have to wait until Nintendo is good and ready to spill a few more beans. In the meantime, polish up your Poké Balls – you're gonna need 'em all! **GM**



The Pokémon Company has a packed line-up of special Pokémon 20 releases for 2016 covering games, apps, trading cards and merchandise. This month the Pokémon Trading Card Game releases the Red & Blue Collection while the iOS and Android app stores have Pokémon Photo Booth where fans can take snapshots, customise them in a Pokémon style and share them with friends.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF POKÉMON

Here's a quick rundown of the mainline Pokémon games that have been released to date. Nintendo has just rereleased Red, Blue and Yellow for 3DS Virtual Console download from the Nintendo eShop.

First Generation

GAME BOY // RED/BLUE [1998]
YELLOW [1998]



The first Pokémon games released were actually Red and Green, released in Japan in 1996, but to keep things simple we're just going to include the Western releases here, and it was 1998 when Red and Blue landed and kick-started a phenomenon.

Second Generation

GAME BOY COLOR // GOLD/SILVER [1999]
CRYSTAL [2000]



In 1999, trainers got to play the game in colour for the first time. Gold and Silver introduced the region of Johto and added 100 new Pokémon, taking the total number to 251. Two new Pokémon types were introduced – Dark and Steel along with a day and night cycle in the game.

Third Generation

GAME BOY ADVANCE // RUBY/SAPPHIRE [2002]
EMERALD [2004]



The improved graphics of the GBA enabled far more detailed visuals for Ruby, Sapphire and Emerald. 135 new Pokémon were added to the roster. This was the generation that introduced Natures. Third gen remakes of Red and Green were also released called FireRed and LeafGreen.

Fourth Generation

NINTENDO DS // DIAMOND/PEARL [2006]
PLATINUM [2008]



Diamond and Pearl were released for Nintendo DS and introduced 107 new Pokémon, taking the total to a hefty 493. They were the first mainline Pokémon games to feature 3D graphics as well as traditional sprites. Additional multiplayer features were added to utilise the DS' online functionality.

Fifth Generation

NINTENDO DS // BLACK/WHITE [2011]
BLACK 2/WHITE 2 [2012]



Black and White took players to the Unova region and added 156 new Pokémon making 649 in total. New battle types Triple and Rotation were introduced. For the first time, direct sequels were launched in the same generation – Black 2 and White 2.

Sixth Generation

NINTENDO 3DS // X/Y [2013]



Another first – this time Pokémon went fully 3D. The transition was made with ease. 69 new monsters – the smallest number of any new Pokémon game to date – took the grand total to 721. The sixth gen also got remakes of third gen games Ruby and Sapphire, called Omega Ruby and Alpha Sapphire.



NEWS BITES

500,000 BRICK DEATH STAR

Open again after its winter break, LEGOLAND Windsor has a big surprise in store for LEGO Star Wars fans – and we mean BIG. 15 LEGO model makers have been beaver away for three months to build a new centrepiece for their LEGO Star Wars Miniland display – a 500,000 brick LEGO Death Star being attacked by the Rebel Alliance! The question is: how much will this LEGO set cost when they release it for Christmas?

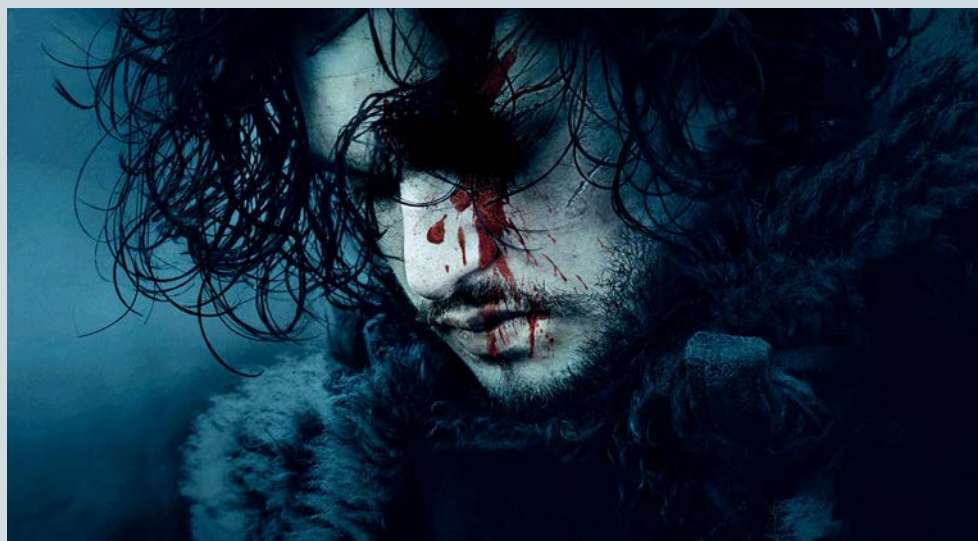


SPOCKING FIVERS

With the sad loss of Leonard Nimoy last year Canadian fans wanted to leave a tribute to the legendary Mr Spock, so 'Spocking' \$5 banknotes became a thing, ripping through the internet with #SpockingFives. While not illegal, the Bank of Canada has now sent out a plea for people to stop 'Spocking', presumably they are running out of notes that show an unadulterated Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a former Canadian Prime Minister.

COLECO CHAMELEON BEWARE

We love our retro games at Geeky Monkey, but so do people with money making schemes. A new retro console that was meant to play 8-bit, 16-bit and 32-bit games was due to launch its Kickstarter campaign at the New York Toy Fair – the Coleco Chameleon. Set in a Atari Jaguar case, it looked the part, but the retro gaming forums and blogs set alight to their plans by speculating that it was simply a SNES in a Jaguar case. Coleco took away their name, and all its web pages disappeared. Caveat emptor!



GAME OF THRONES – DEAD OR ALIVE?

Not long to wait now before we return to the land of Westeros for season six of Game of Thrones – 24 April on HBO and Sky Atlantic. While we know that HBO has never shied away from killing off its lead characters: Eddard Stark, Robb Stark, Joffrey Baratheon, Tywin Lannister, Robert Baratheon and of course Jon Snow have all bought it, to name just six out of 61 dead. What we didn't know until now is that they're happy to bring the dead back for more screen time too! We know that Jon Snow is in the new season – actor Kit Harington has even gone so far as to admit that he has been filming new scenes. Eagle-eyed fans watching the teaser trailer earlier in the month will have spotted Jon Snow's direwolf guarding him dressed in armour and what appears to be a young Ned Stark, head back on his body, drawing his sword for battle. So can we expect a resurrection of Jon? The speculation is that Ser Davos Seaworth will use magic to bring him back to life, rather than have him turn into a White Walker. Sean Bean fans can calm down though, we know that a casting call went out last year for an actor that looks like a young Mr Bean, so the Ned Stark scenes are surely flashbacks? All we be revealed on 24 April.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“No matter how much he cries, no matter how much he begs, never feed him after midnight!”

GIZMO FEEDING TIPS, GREMLINS



SAY HELLO TO A NEW ECTO-2

With the new Ghostbusters movie premiering on 15 July, Sony Pictures has been teasing new pictures from the set – including a new Ghostbusters bike they are calling Ecto-2. Woah. Hang on. Don't we already have an Ecto-2? Fans of The Real Ghostbusters or the Ghostbusters comic will remember the Ecto-2 was a mini-helicopter that could be launched from inside the Ecto-1, or from a pad on top of the firehouse. You can't just slap a Ghostbusters logo on a bike and call it Ecto-2. Okay, the proton pack weapon on the front looks cool.

MAP OF GEEK

WELCOME TO OUR NEW FEATURE
TAKING YOU ON A TOUR OF GEEK
BRITAIN, COUNTY BY COUNTY.
FIRST UP IS LEAFY GREEN
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

// BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

It's the start of the Chilterns for ordinary tourists, but hiding geeky depths for us geeky fans. Not for nothing is Buckinghamshire labelled "...the most filmed county in England" by the Visit England tourism website!

Fans of period dramas and rural TV sleuthing have been familiar with the county over the years, featuring as it has in everything from 1942 Ealing war drama *Went the Day Well?* to *The Duchess* via *The Vicar of Dibley* and *Midsomer Murders*, but many a geek classic has shot here too. Part of the 2009 BBC version of Brit sci-fi classic *The Day of the Triffids* used the village of Turville. Cobstone Mill nearby turns up in 1968 family fantasy *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. West Wycombe Village, House and Park also feature in period pieces, including John Landis' *Simon Pegg and Andy Serkis*-starring horror-comedy *Burke & Hare* and *X-Men: First Class* (the Russia estate). The village's Mausoleum was used by Stanley Kubrick to film the biblical fantasy sequence in his notorious sci-fi adap *A Clockwork Orange*.

Professional geek Pegg is still best known for his work on the *Cornetto* Trilogy with fellow

West Countryman director Edgar Wright, who has strong links to Buckinghamshire. He has worked with the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, previewed rough cuts to students at Bucks New Uni in High Wycombe, and shot scenes for both *Hot Fuzz* and *The World's End* in the county. The former makes use of Denham Golf Club station for Nick Angel's trip out to Sandford, while the latter uses both High Wycombe Station and a couple of local pub interiors.

James Bond has visited, of course, playing *Goldfinger* at the Stoke Poges Golf Club by Stoke Park, while in *Thunderball* Major Derval stayed overnight at the Saracen Head Pub in Beaconsfield. This is because James Bond movies are filmed at Pinewood Studios, home of the Albert R Broccoli 007 soundstage and a half-hour's drive from Gerrards Cross. The site of so, so much geeky film and TV made over the years including *Aliens*, *Alien 3*, *Captain America: The First Avenger* and *Ex Machina*, it is currently home to *Red Dwarf* and all the new *Star Wars* films. Yes folks, the Millennium Falcon is parked in Bucks county for the foreseeable future. **GM**



CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG



SPECTRE



BURKE & HARE



THE WORLD'S END



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS



HE NEEDS A HUG

JJ Abrams is doing the press junket rounds for 10 Cloverfield Lane as we write, but what's the thing that everyone wants to ask him about? His one regret from directing Star Wars: The Force Awakens, that's what. He has admitted to website SlashFilm.com that after [spoiler alert if you're the one person who hasn't see the movie] Han Solo was murdered by his own son, rather than have Leia give Rey a big hug, she should have saved it for Chewbacca. She even walks right past the poor Wookiee to get to Rey, who she has never even met before! After all, poor Chewie has only spent most of his life by Han's side, he's going to be a bit upset. JJ's thinking was that Chewie was focussed on saving Finn, so didn't have time for a hug. Watch the scene again when the home version is released on 18 April.



MACHINIMA GO!

Already fed up of the lack of content in the new Street Fighter V? Well you can feed your hunger for more with a new live action mini-series launching this month from Machinima on their go90 and YouTube channels – Street Fighter: Resurrection. You'll get to see Ken and Ryu slogging it out once again as they join forces to take on Charlie Nash who has a deadly plan with the other Street Fighters in his sights. All with Capcom's blessing, of course.

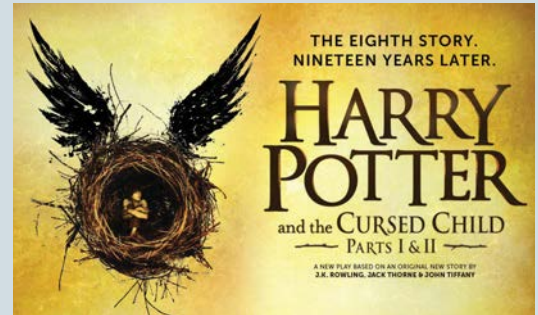
HARRY POTTER-MORE, AND MORE

All fans of Harry Potter knew it wouldn't be the end when Harry blasted Voldemort and he disappeared with a disappointingly weak puff. JK Rowling has been very busy since – the prequel Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them is coming to cinemas on 18 November, and the cast of a new Harry Potter play set 19 years after The Deathly Hallows has just been announced.

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child: Parts I & II will play at the Palace Theatre in London from July. Harry is now overworked at the Ministry of Magic, and has three kids. One of the little Potters, his eldest Albus, struggles with the famous family legacy. Father and son discover that sometimes darkness comes from unexpected places.

With Fantastic Beasts set in 1926 New York as Newt Scamander stops over in the city on a tour of the wizarding world in search of magical creatures, there is certainly some backstory that fans of the series need filling in on. Well luckily Rowling has put pen to paper once again and created a new collection of four texts to introduce readers to this branch of the Harry Potter universe. The first is History of Magic in North America, and Rowling's website Pottermore is the funnel that all of this new material must pass through.

With Harry Potter being very much a British institution, it's odd to see Rowling moving the franchise well and truly to America for Fantastic Beasts. Has she been seduced by the bright lights of Hollywood for her screenwriting debut? Surely it was the very Britishness that gave Harry Potter its charm in the first place? Ironically, New York in the scene below is in actual fact Liverpool with fake snow.



WHAT A TWEET

"I really hope Batman V Superman is just them facing each other three feet apart, taking turns punching for 2 1/2 hours."

MOVIE SCRIPT WRITER TO BE, @KUMAILN

Q&A Jeremy Bulloch

AKA BOBA FETT, THE MOST FEARED BOUNTY HUNTER IN THE STAR WARS GALAXY

Why do you think that Boba Fett has been such an enduring character for Star Wars fans? Only on screen for a few minutes, but such an icon.

Well I think Boba Fett is quite lovable really, but exceptionally dangerous – you don't cross him. But there's something about him... he would help you out. Any day if you needed the help, he would be there. But suddenly he can turn and twist, and people watch for that. I mean it's amazing. Sometimes I used to say to the grandchildren if they were misbehaving, "Now, I am an icon, please behave yourselves." Then I realise what I fool I was. No, but it's the outfit that does it. There's no point in me as an actor saying, "Well I changed course, and I did this..." No, the costume is halfway there, and it's a terrific character.

Are you ever tempted to get a Boba Fett costume and parade around at ComicCon events?

Well I have done it here, I have done it to raise money for charity, and it was terrific to put it back on again. And then you start looking at people... I said, "Oh come on!" to myself. Just settle down, you played a part which was on screen for no more than eight minutes. And it's still going on.

What do you think of the new Star Wars: The Force Awakens?

Oh I saw the new Episode, and the energy going through that with the two leads in the cast – I thought it was terrific. My wife and I sat one lunchtime in dear old Stretham. There was no one else in the cinema because all the kids were at school. We sat back and I thought it was terrific. Now we wait for the next one. It's such excitement – it will go on and on and on.

Tell us a bit about the fan made Order of the Sith Vengeance movie that you did with Dave Prowse and other Star Wars actors.

Well I can't remember too much about it now but those things are going on all the time. It's, "Can we just have five minutes?" and you acted out a part with the guys as a Mandalorian. They make so many fan made films, some of them are very good. They are great, you join in and be part of it.



"WELL I THINK BOBA FETT IS QUITE LOVABLE REALLY, BUT EXCEPTIONALLY DANGEROUS"



While Jeremy is famous for playing Boba Fett, he got to appear without the mask when the actor booked as an Imperial Officer to drag Princess Leia away in The Empire Strikes Back didn't show.

Have you got fond memories of your time on the early series of Doctor Who in the 1960s?

Yes, I did two sessions of Doctor Who. One with William Hartnell, who was a bit sort of edgy, "What's your name son?" There was a bit of that going on. He was very good at the end, he said, "Well done son, you listened, you learned something, didn't ya?" I said, "Yes I think I have learned something." What he didn't realise was what I had learned was that some of his behaviour wasn't quite friendly. Jon Pertwee was a delight. Both stories I enjoyed doing.

You must have been to your fair share of conventions and ComicCons. You you enjoy doing them?

Oh yes, you come to these ComicCon events and you see old friends, and you see the people involved in all this. You meet new people, different actors. It's terrific. It's good to see the people dressed as their favourite characters, in something they've made overnight. I think that's an asset to the show.

What's the craziest thing a fan has asked you to do or say?

At a lot of these ComicCon events they have tattoo artists. A girl asked, "Would you sign your name on my arm?" I signed it but said, "You shouldn't do that because you'll never get it off, it's permanent ink." The next thing I know there's this sizzling flesh, she had got a tattooist to write my name underneath a tattoo of Boba Fett. That was strange. It was done with a quick shimmer and a "Hello", but to then tattoo it – that was scary.

Have you seen the new military uniforms based on the Boba Fett costume? We had them in last issue of Geeky Monkey.

Oh, a Boba Fett Mandalorian realistic armour. That's amazing, maybe I could teach them? It's a big scary that – it's the same helmet and bits and pieces.

Jeremy Bulloch is next appearing at the Film & Comic Con Exeter from 25-26 June and is a regular celebrity at film and sci-fi conventions around the world.

THE ANTICIPATION OF THE 90'S HIT TV SERIES RETURN HAS PUT THE LATEST SEASON ON A LOFTY (IF NOT SHAKY) PEDESTAL. WITH SUCH HIGH EXPECTATIONS, IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE THAT NOT EVERYONE WILL BE PLEASED WITH CREATOR CHRIS CARTER'S LATEST OFFERING...

FIGHTING TALK

THE X-FILES SEASON 10 WAS...



...a welcome return

SAYS CLAIRE LIM

Much fanfare was made around the return of the latest season of The X-Files and at the time of writing this, I'm up to date (in the UK) having just watched the third episode of the tenth season.

Thus far, I've managed to (mostly) avoid spoilers, reviews and commentary but the odd tidbit has sneaked onto my radar with US pal's episodes ahead and some UK friends catching season ten, let's say, by 'other means'. My geeky brethren have mostly torn into season ten claiming that Carter has attempted to re-write history by turning the alien conspiracy story on its head, that David Duchovny seems to have forgotten how to act and there's been various stabs at the basic structure and feel of the episodes. But despite their misgivings, I'm still glad to see The X-Files back on TV.

After 14 years apart there's bound to be teething problems with a team that haven't worked together for so long. Since then the cast and Carter have worked on many different projects. They've grown. They've had different experiences as people. Coming together as a team again and having that 'perfect chemistry' is sometimes hard to recreate. But besides that... are the episodes I've seen thus far all that bad? Well, no actually. In my humble (geeky) opinion there are worse things

on TV right now and for the sake of positivity here, I shan't name and shame!

AFTER 14 YEARS APART THERE'S BOUND TO BE TEETHING PROBLEMS WITH A TEAM THAT HAVEN'T WORKED TOGETHER FOR SO LONG

Perhaps disgruntled fans are looking back on the series with rose tinted glasses. I remember 90's X-Files episodes that ranged from sophisticated conspiracy tales to humorous, hammy Twilight Zone-esque set pieces. One of The X-Files' greatest strengths is that the writers can play with the genre – there's so much ground to cover.

With the exception of the comical, razor-sharp Ash Vs Evil Dead, it's great to see another show willing to toy with its genre. This is Chris Carter's baby and any irritated fans that have declared they've stopped watching will just have to put up and shut up. Stop being so precious and just enjoy the nostalgia of The X-Files return!



...lacking any tension

SAYS JEM ROBERTS

The clunk-zip of the VHS tapes of original X-Files going into the machine for yet another viewing twenty years ago is a very distant memory. Now most TV shows are just a few naughty clicks away – and yet, there they are, back on the screen – Dana and Fox, and it’s like nothing’s ever happened... Quite disconcertingly so, in fact. Did we dream all that stuff about bees and cancer and Scully being impregnated and all the other numerous developments over the decades, revealing that The Truth really is out there? Because it feels like it, as the new season plays out.

We can leave aside the more controversial complaints about Chris Carter’s returning show – specifically Dame Gillian Anderson, movie star, commanding star of *The Fall* and endless deluxe BBC costume dramas, earning less than David Duchovny... with all that he’s done since *The X-Files* ended. All the things, that make him worth more money. He’s admitted the injustice, let’s move on.

But it’s turned out to be much harder work to go along with the show’s return than any of us expected – how the hell are we supposed to pretend that there’s any tension between the stars after all they’ve been through

together? Even worse, having seen all we’ve seen over the programme’s long history. The black oil, the bees, the monsters skanking to Cher, ad nauseam, are we really supposed to be gripped by the possibility that – shock horror – weird shit really happens?

When Mulder puts up a front of seeming defeated, a new-born skeptic, who wasn’t screaming out at the screen: “Mate, you’ve met more aliens than Arthur bloody Dent!”?

But then, we saw the third episode in this mini-series run. The hugely fun Mulder & Scully meet The Were-Monster, and we were silenced – that’s more like it. You see, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully are one of the greatest double acts in geek history, there’s no placing them in mothballs, they’re immortal in a number of media, and can’t be put back in their box. But this is how they should function in the 21st Century – a kind of modern Abbott & Costello, finding themselves on random freaky cases, and X-Files story arcs be blown, because the number of people left who care that ‘The Truth is out there’ must be minuscule.

We welcome back more cases for Mulder and Scully, just don’t ask us to take any of it seriously, ever again.

The new mini-series has caused Mulder to question his faith in the unexplained – again.

YOUR SAY

THERE'S SOME STRONG FEELING OUT THERE FOR THE X-FILES. WE WANT TO BELIEVE THAT ALL THESE COMMENTS WERE GENUINE...

FIGHTING



I'm genuinely delighted that The X-Files are back even for a limited run. The tone and delivery of the series was perfect and classic X-Files. Both the actors were amazing and seemed to hit all the grace notes of the first seven seasons in six episodes covering paranoia, aliens, conspiracies, monster of the week, laughter and tears. A great return and I pray for more!

MATT TONES

Due to the severe sci-fi drought on television I will accept X-Files and I will watch every episode twice just so that it doesn't get cancelled because the alternative of being left with nothing... don't make me go back there man, I need sci-fi.

SKYLA EDWARDS

I was extremely excited about the new X-Files. It took a while to get Scully and Mulder back into the swing of things, but they've come together beautifully and I personally love this little rollercoaster of episodes. Although a lot of the episodes didn't really link, they played a part in stating just how corrupt and alien-like this planet and humanity are in selected crowds. I have loved it and I want to believe.

HARRIET JAN SIMS

I've really enjoyed the revival. Episode 2 was touching with the 'what might have been' moments with Mulder and Scully and their kid. Episode 3 was hilarious. So many in-jokes and references, as well as a fun twist on the were-creature with a satire of what it means to be human.

KEITH TUDOR

It was great, a blast from the past straight from the intro. Included what was perhaps the best man-in-a-rubber-suit episode I've ever seen. It's a shame it was only a mini-series. Would be more of a shame if they used it to launch a revived X-Files with Einstein and the other guy played by Robbie Amel without Mulder and Scully in it.

DAVEY MUIRHEID

As a big fan of the previous nine series of the show I found it hard to get into this reboot. Clichéd through and through and more miss than hit. They have left it too long like a lot of shows and I can see the glue on the seams... it didn't feel natural. I so wanted for this show to get back in the seat and have the world into UFOs again but there's too much going on with other and more real conspiracies than that now... it's a painful thumbs down. This new series has Dave Duchovs voice so soporific that it functions better than valium. Having trouble sleeping? Episodes 3 and 5 should do it.

JACKSON PEARSE

Ah it's been great, yeah it feels slightly different but they had to at least update it a bit! And the lizard man episode was brilliant, I was hoping for at least one good old-fashioned silly episode this series. And Tim Armstrong from Rancid popping up as the Trash Man was very cool.

DAN MCGRADY

BACK

THE GEEKY MONKEY WORLD

DID YOU LISTEN TO OUR NEW PODCAST, LAUNCHED LAST MONTH? WELL THERE'S A NEW ONE AVAILABLE WITH EACH NEW ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE...

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Follow the Geeky Monkey team on Twitter to fill your life with nuggets of geeky goodness all day long.

PODCAST

[[SEARCH "GEEKY MONKEY" ON SOUNDCLOUD OR ITUNES](#)]



Thanks for all the kind words about our premiere podcast last month. Our podcast feed is now up and running on iTunes, so you can subscribe and get us being geeky in your ears every month without fail! This time around our host Paul Gannon introduces a plethora of geeky goodness. Matt Highton enthuses about 30 years of

Zelda, we have Richard Sandling talking about his new movie comedy show, Claire Lim is in LA this month but that didn't stop her calling in for a chat and we have opinion on the new Ghostbusters trailer and The Crystal Maze Live Experience! Drop us a line through Facebook or Twitter to let us know what you think of the podcast, and give us suggestions on how we can make it even better for future months.

Jabber Talky

OUR NEW GEEK IN RESIDENCE, CLAIRE LIM, IS TAKING ON A BURNING SUBJECT FROM THE GEEKIVERSE EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH SHE ASKS...
“CAN COMICS SHOW US HOW TO BE BETTER PEOPLE?”



WITH RESIDENT GEEK, CLAIRE LIM
 @WEECLAIRE

In terms of art and literature, nothing has had a bigger impact on me and my general outlook on life than comics. Comics herald the way for diversity; they're inspiring and groundbreaking works of art and they can show us how to be better people too.

This train of thought began with Rick Remender's *Low* from Image Comics – I was blown away by the story but Greg Tocchini's dreamy artwork deserves high praise too. Set billions of years in the future on Earth, after the sun's expansion into a red giant, *Low* follows the Caine family, in particular, the matriarch of the family Stel Caine. With the surface of the planet uninhabitable, the family live under the sea in the city of Salus and after a series of tragic events Stel is left widowed and in search of her two daughters who have been kidnapped. In the face of adversity, Stel is never sorrowful, frosty or regretful but a beacon of hope in the darkness. Remender himself described *Low* as “one woman's optimism in the face of inevitable and true doom.” And hell, does she deliver.

Stel's character, in particular, was what attracted me to *Low* and kept me hooked. I was in a bad place at the time I started the series and it was one of the things that brought me out of my funk. Stel's strength as a human being, as a woman and as a Mother is moving. Her loyalty never falters and her courage is beyond admirable. With the news, social media and modern life in general bombarding us with messages of death, destruction and doom, we need to remember to stay true to ourselves and keep fighting for what's right. We are capable of terrible things but the purest of human qualities shine through Stel Caine. A tiny part of my getting better is down to this series.

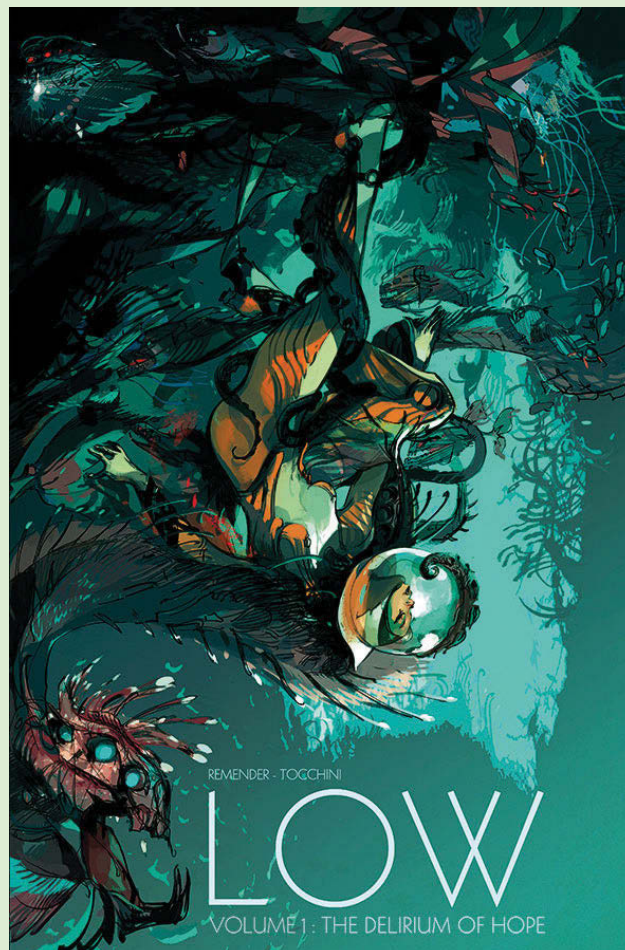
Comics often also mirror modern life, showing us our fears and desires. Temptation and ambition are all around us and Scott McCloud's *The Sculptor* handles some of these themes beautifully. I'd definitely consider myself an ambitious person. I love my day job, I love my hobbies, I love combining the two sometimes. If I wasn't married and a faithful human slave to my cat, I'd probably mostly live to work. I don't see this as a bad thing but

sometimes I question my own ambition versus life, spirituality and what the hell this all really means.

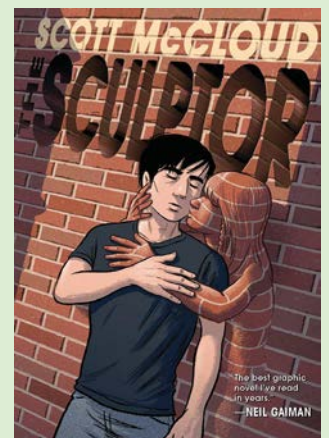
The Sculptor follows twenty something New Yorker David Smith who experienced some success when a collector discovered him whilst studying. This success was short lived and David is left near penniless and out of ideas until Death appears in the form of his deceased great uncle. David is offered the ability to create anything he wants from any material but will only have 200 days to live, however, this 'gift' doesn't turn out exactly how he plans. Unlike single-minded ambition, love and

self-acceptance are human traits we should prize above the rest and McCloud presents these themes eloquently.

These are only two examples amongst an array of brilliant stories I've read that have altered my perception. One may argue that any piece of literature or art can make us better people, it depends on how we interpret it. But, for me, comics are my safe place, my 'thinking time', the place where I plant seeds of ideas that grow into changing patterns of thought and colourful ideas. If you need some moral inspiration, look no further than comics to show you the way. **CL**



“COMICS ARE MY SAFE PLACE, MY 'THINKING TIME', THE PLACE WHERE I PLANT SEEDS OF IDEAS THAT GROW INTO CHANGING PATTERNS OF THOUGHT”



READING MATTERS

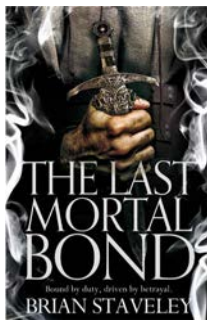
Words: JOHN HOULIHAN

Author of the Seraph books and ex-Editor-in-Chief of CVG.com

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECTACULAR IN THE AIR IN THIS MONTH'S INTRIGUING MIX OF HIGH FANTASY, CLASSIC SCI-FI, MILITARY AND SPACE OPERA...

THE LAST MORTAL BOND

BRIAN STAVELEY



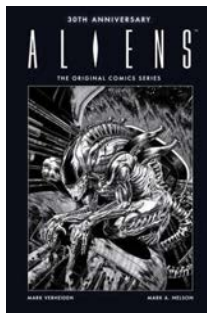
The third book in Brian Staveley's Chronicles of the Unhewn Throne sees the fantasy saga really hit its stride. The Annurian Empire is crumbling, facing war on all fronts, an issue not helped by the split between siblings Adare, who covets the Emperor's throne and her brother Kaden, the true heir, who is willing to forgo his claim to save the realm. With the empire having to call on its

veteran warriors the Kettral, the very gods themselves walking the Earth and General Ran il Tornja's true malevolence finally revealed, this promises to be a climactic conclusion to this saga of intrigue, brutality and treachery.

A WEIGHTY 184 PAGE TOME WHICH PERFECTLY CAPTURES THE SURVIVAL NIGHTMARE OF RIPLEY, HICKS AND NEWT

ALIENS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

MARK VERHEIDEN & MARK A NELSON



Is it really 30 years since Aliens burst onto the big screen and through our chests? Well, it is and this lavish graphic novel from Dark Horse Comics is a reprint of that seminal comic series wrapped in a splendid oversized hardback cover, complete and unabridged. Written by Mark Verheiden who went on to write major TV and movie series like Timecop, Battlestar Galactica and Daredevil, it features superbly

detailed illustrations by Mark A Nelson in a weighty 184 page tome which perfectly captures the survival nightmare of Ripley, Hicks and Newt. A note perfect celebration of the best Alien film (yup, sue us), we think it'll come out at night... mostly.

COLE'S WORK HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS 'BLACK HAWK DOWN MEETS THE X-MEN', WHICH IS A DECENT RECOMMENDATION

JAVELIN RAIN

MYKE COLE



Military fantasy is perhaps a slightly unusual genre, but Myke Cole's Shadow Ops series has provided many an authentic, engrossing reading. Javelin Rain looks like no exception with former Navy Seal Jim Schweitzer brought back from the dead and on the run with his wife and child from the shadowy government agency which revived him. Cole's work has been described as

'Black Hawk Down meets the X-Men', which is a decent recommendation indeed. Javelin Rain looks like it'll certainly live up to expectations.

HARAKEN (THE SILVER SHIPS: BOOK 4)

SH JUCHA



The fourth book in SH Jucha's galaxy spanning sci-fi epic sees a fascinating reversal as the Haraken and Méri dien colonists of Hellébore encounter a new 'alien' invader, a mission from Earth professing friendship and urging them to rejoin the distant homeworld. Yet Méri dien President Alex Racine is uncertain about their true motives and with Méri dien in

turmoil, and a United Earth battleship on the way, can he forge a new understanding and protect the system from these deadly new invaders? Another solid slab of space opera is in prospect.

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ALL WORK AND NO PLAY
MAKES JACK A DULL BOY

JACK TORRANCE



THE SHINING [1980]

directed by
STANLEY KUBRICK

featuring
JACK NICHOLSON // JACK TORRANCE
SHELLEY DUVALL // WENDY TORRANCE

Based on Stephen King's 1977 novel, but taking its own story path, the 1980 movie sees Jack Nicholson give a stunning performance as Jack Torrance. A writer and recovering alcoholic, Jack winds up as caretaker of an isolated hotel. He slowly goes mad under the influence of a ghostly presence and tries to murder his wife and son.

The movie has some unforgettable lines, so over on Twitter we asked you "What's your favourite quote from the Stanley Kubrick classic The Shining?"

HEEERE'S JOHNNY!	35%
ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES JACK A DULL BOY.	47%
REDRUM. REDRUM. REDRUM!	6%
LITTLE PIGS, LITTLE PIGS, LET ME COME IN. NOT BY THE HAIR OF YOUR CHINY-CHIN- CHIN? WELL THEN I'LL HUFF AND I'LL PUFF, AND I'LL BLOW YOUR HOUSE IN.	12%

DON'T MISS



[THE BIG ONE]

Fear The Walking Dead, Season 2

PREMIERE DATE, 11 APRIL // STUDIO, AMC GLOBAL

There's an interesting trend developing with major series spawning high-quality spin-offs with similar scope and production values to the originals. Last month saw the start of season two of *Better Call Saul*, this month the second season of *Fear The Walking Dead* lurches onto our screens.

Unlike *BCS*, season one wasn't roundly lauded as an instant classic. The fact it was comprised of just six episodes indicates that AMC was dipping its toe in the water to gauge reaction with a shorter run before committing and going all in. The response, predictably, was mixed. *The Walking Dead* is so entrenched in popular culture now that any spin-off show is inevitably going to be subjected to far greater scrutiny than if it were a new IP.

Some of the criticism levelled at *Fear The Walking Dead* season one concerned the slow pacing of some of the episodes, however this was to set up and flesh out the characters. Now we know who they are, we're sure to have lots more action and drama to look forward over the course of season two's 15 episodes. As executive producer David Erickson put it, "We began by exploring the apocalypse through the filter of a family drama and now the apocalypse has taken over its exploring the family drama through the filter of the apocalypse, that's the shift."

One thing's for sure – the season one finale was as good as anything we've seen in a long time!

Everyone connected with the show has remained incredibly tight-lipped on what to expect from season two, so pretty much everything is speculation and conjecture. Unlike the mainline *Walking Dead* series, there are no *FOTWD* comics to give us a clue as to what to expect, so the show's creators have complete carte blanche to take these characters wherever they want. Although, as producer Dave Alpert says,

"Being the world of *The Walking Dead*, nobody's safe."

From the season two promo we can gather that Madison is going to be a central figure in the show going forward.

"In season two I'm really looking forward to seeing what happens to Madison," said Alpert. "How's she going to evolve, I want to know more about what her backstory is. I think we'll get some of those answers."

Kim Dickens who plays Madison added "The dark past that she has, that she keeps as a secret, is probably going to be the thing that serves her." Interesting stuff.

"ITS EXPLORING THE FAMILY DRAMA THROUGH THE FILTER OF THE APOCALYPSE"

As to where the survivors will end up, well, that's anybody's guess. After that brilliant finale they now have a boat which theoretically means they can go anywhere they want. Will they stay around LA and California? Will they set sail for somewhere new? While on the water they're relatively safe but of course they only have finite supplies so they'll need to come ashore eventually. The long and short of it is anything could happen. We'll leave the final words to David Erickson...

"They're starting to understand that it is about how not to die and I think in the seasons to come it will really be about what are you willing to do to avoid that, and that to me is an interesting thing to explore." **GM**

Fear the Walking Dead season 2 premieres on 11 April on AMC, exclusive to BT.



OUT THIS MONTH // MOVIES



They just couldn't Let It Go...

If ever there was a reason to hungrily extend the Grimm brothers' ancient franchise, you'd think the further adventures of Snow White starring Kristen Stewart would be the doozy, drawing in millions of grieving Hunger Games fans. There's a very different commercial angle here, though – throwing Hans Christian Andersen into the brew, to cash in on Frozen, with Emily Blunt starring as Charlize Theron's Snow Queen sister, in a part-prequel, part sequel – with no Snow White (thanks, allegedly, to the 'scandal' surrounding Stewart's affair with the original film's director, Rupert Sanders). In *The Huntsman: Winter's War*, Chris Hemsworth is back as the titular tracker, and there are some pleasing additions to the cast, including Sheridan Smith and Rob Brydon, but Nick Frost is the only 'dwarf' back in action.

This time round we delve into the Evil Stepmother Queen Ravenna's back-story, and how her vanity and cruelty turned her Snow-White-pure sibling Freya into a force for frosty retribution, raising an army to end her reign, with only one rule for soldiers, including our Huntsman: do not fall in love. Obviously, he's going to ignore that, but less predictable is the twist that, once Ravenna is safely banished into the Magic Mirror, Freya only decides to revive her and plunge the whole world into darkness. Talk about a lack of game plan.

There is a transparent desperation in the mongrel brand extension, true, but the first film was a superior offering amid a spattering of 'ever so dark' fairy tale movie releases, and the sequel is packed with British talent and totally made on UK soil, so let's not be too quick to call a halt on the gravy train. We look forward to Andy Serkis turning up as Rapunzel in the next Grimm gamble on the box office. **GM**

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

Despite the porn-suggesting name, *Hardcore Henry* is a sci-fi action movie told entirely from a first-person perspective. There's no cast to speak of (well, Tim Roth cameos, but post-Sebastian Blatter, is that a selling point?) but the audience will be cast in the role of Robocop – that is to say, Henry – a revived corpse turned cybernetic super-soldier, awaking in a Moscow lab and tasked with saving his wife from the psycho who made him. There will be bullets.



25 March

★ **Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice**
// WARNER BROS

1 April

★ **Eddie The Eagle**
// LIONSGATE
★ **Natural Born Pranksters**
// LIONSGATE

8 April

★ **Hardcore Henry**
// ENTERTAINMENT FILM
★ **The Huntsman Winter's War**
// UNIVERSAL
★ **The Man Who Knew Infinity**
// WARNER BROS
★ **Midnight Special**
// ENTERTAINMENT ONE

15 April

★ **Eye In The Sky**
// ENTERTAINMENT ONE
★ **The Jungle Book**
// WALT DISNEY
★ **The Sweeney: Paris**
// VERTIGO

22 April

★ **Whiskey Tango Foxtrot**
// PARAMOUNT



Superman's cuz is flying high...

We're still not quite sure as to why we were forced to wait so damn long for the return of Melissa Benoist's Kara Zor-El, but our best guess is that it's because Sky wanted to ensure viewers would be treated to an uninterrupted barrage of episodes from now until June, whereas US audiences have been forced to watch the remainder of the series in annoying staccato-like fashion until the finale airs in May, because of a series of vexing Network breaks on American soil.

Still, this month sees the long awaited return of Supergirl on Sky1, and boy it's been gruelling trying to dodge the swathe of spoilers online tethered to that doozy of a cliff-hanger that unfurled during the closing moments of Hostile Takeover back in December. While in-depth and spoiler-filled details on the midseason premiere, Blood Bonds, and subsequent episodes are readily available online, we're going to do our best to keep things to a minimum here. The episode picks up right where Hostile Takeover left off, with Supergirl preparing to get scrappy with Kryptonian villain, Non, while at the same time trying to deal with the repercussions of Cat's discovery that Kara is in fact Supergirl. "They're dealing with both the comedy of the emotion and the drama of that story in Episode 9," explains Supergirl's producer, Andrew Kreisberg.

Alongside this there's also the fallout from the actions of her mother, Alura, who betrayed her own daughter on multiple occasions in the past. "She's really lost," says Kreisberg. "As you start to live your life, you realize that your parents didn't always have the answers. It's a further step in Kara's own journey as a hero and everyone's maturation as we become adults and become our parents." The stakes, it would seem, will be rather high when Kara Zor-El returns to our screens after some much needed soul searching amongst the stars. **GM**

OUTLANDISH

Amazon Prime subscribers rejoice in the knowledge that the second season of Outlander makes its streaming debut just a mere 24 hours after it airs on Starz in the US. The story for this sophomore season has been culled from the pages of Diana Gabaldon's second novel, Dragonfly In Amber. Stars Jamie Fraser and his pregnant wife, Claire, venture to France and immerse themselves in French society with a little help from his cousin, Jared, a local wine merchant, in a bid to alter the course of history by attempting to put a stop to the Battle of Culloden. Buckle up time travellers, because this should be stellar telly.



Streaming

★ **Better Call Saul, Season 2**
// NETFLIX

★ **Daredevil, Season 2**
// NETFLIX

★ **House of Cards, Season 4**
// NETFLIX

1 April

★ **Supergirl, Season 1 part 2**
// SKY1

10 April

★ **11.22.63, Season 1**
// FOX UK

★ **Outlander, Season 2**
// AMAZON PRIME

11 April

★ **Fear The Walking Dead, Season 2**
// AMC GLOBAL

25 April

★ **Game of Thrones, Season 6**
// SKY ATLANTIC

27 April

★ **12 Monkeys, Season 2**
// SYFY UK



Soul survivor...

It's a pretty bleak month for gamers, who have very little of note to look forward to over the next four weeks with one major exception, and that exception is the bleakest thing of all. Are you ready to get your ass kicked repeatedly in a dark, dank, oppressive (yet strangely seductive) world? If so, then you're ready for the nightmare of Dark Souls III, you crazy, masochistic bastard you!

FromSoftware's hack 'n' slash role playing series is notorious for its brutal difficulty level, but the satisfaction gained from defeating opponents that seem at first impossible makes it a hugely rewarding experience – if you're prepared to put in the hard yards. We're promised a deeper experience this time around with more emphasis on the role playing aspects of the game, and there will be new skills that enable you to modify and customise your attacks with different weapons. This, we're promised, will allow players to deeply personalise their game experience and play style.

If you want to be punished, frustrated and have your patience flogged to within an inch of your sanity, pick up Dark Souls III when it comes out on 12 April. Just don't come crying to us when the pain comes.

Other than Dark Souls III there's very little to get excited about after Street Fighter V, The Division, Mortal Kombat XL and Far Cry Primal all dropped last month, and reviewed in this issue. Hyrule Warriors: Legends on 3DS will tickle a few fancies, and just launched. There's also the latest instalment in the unsung but really rather good Tropico series which enables you to live out your secret Central American dictator fantasies. A Ratchet & Clank origin story in a similar style to the original PS2 game is coming to PS4 and the fact that gets a mention here proves how slim the month's pickings are. **GM**

FAST AND DIRTY

Fans of off-road racing can look forward to two titles this month – MXGP2 is a motocross game and the follow up to the tepidly received MXGP. It doesn't look massively more interesting than its predecessor. More exciting is DiRT Rally from Codemasters, which is the latest in the racing series that has evolved from what used to be the Colin McRae games. DiRT Rally came out on PC last year and is actually very good, marking a return to the more hardcore sim roots of the series. Both games are coming to Xbox One and PlayStation 4.



DiRT RALLY LEGEND EDITION

25 March

★ **Tropico 5 Penultimate Edition** // XB1

1 April

★ **MXGP2** // PS4/XB1/PC
 ★ **Nights of Azure** // PS4
 ★ **Trillion God of Destruction** // PSV
 ★ **LEGO Dimensions: Midway Arcade Level Pack** // ALL FORMATS

5 April

★ **Quantum Break** // XB1
 ★ **DiRT Rally Legend Edition** // XB1/PS4/PC

6 April

★ **Assassin's Creed Chronicles** // PS4/PSV/XB1

12 April

★ **Dark Souls III** // XB1/PS4/PC

22 April

★ **Ratchet and Clank** // PS4
 ★ **Lichdom: Battlemage** // PS4
 ★ **Fairy Fencer F: Advent Dark Force** // PS4



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HOUSE OF WYNDHAM

A POST APOCALYPTIC VISION

THE PLANET IS SUDDENLY BLINDED BY AN UNEXPLAINED METEORITE SHOWER BEFORE BEING OVERRUN BY A PLAGUE OF GIANT KILLER PLANTS. A SMALL ENGLISH VILLAGE TERRORISED BY ITS OWN SEEMINGLY SUPERHUMAN CHILDREN. A WORLD IS LAID WASTE BY ALIEN-INDUCED FLOODS. EVEN IN OUR OWN TIME, WHEN WE ARE PRESENTED WITH FRESH FICTIONAL ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS WITH ALMOST EVERY NEW BOXSET, BRITISH AUTHOR JOHN WYNDHAM'S TALENT FOR CREATING CHILLING FUTURISTIC VISIONS IN A SERIES OF BOOKS DURING THE 1950S AND 60S IS STILL REMARKABLE. BUT AS HIS SUCCESS INCREASED AND THE NUMBER OF FILM AND TV VERSIONS OF HIS NOVELS GREW, THE QUESTION REMAINS: DO HIS STORIES WORK AS WELL ON THE SCREEN AS THEY DO ON THE PAGE?

Words: CHRIS HALLAM

Green fingered fantasy and sci-fi freelance writer



Although only six half-hour episodes were made, the BBC's 1981 *The Day of the Triffids* stuck in the minds of viewers.



APOCALYPSE THEN

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS

BOOK // 1951, DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY

FILM // 1963, RANK ORGANISATION

TV // 1981 & 2009, BBC

What was he thinking? What could have possessed a middle aged man, already an established author and living in the serenely bland environment of post-war Britain, to conjure up something like *The Day of the Triffids*? Yet in 1951 John Wyndham (born John Benyon Harris in 1903) did just that, producing the first of what Brian Aldiss has described as his “cosy catastrophes”: in reality a fantastic and yet somehow chillingly plausible scenario. The post-war world was in fact much less secure than it seemed. Wyndham, in his forties, had already witnessed two World Wars (he had served in the second) and with the Americans and Soviets both now armed with atomic weapons, the possibility that mankind might destroy itself was very real indeed.

This was the world which saw the birth of Wyndham’s most famous science fiction creation. The action of *The Day of the Triffids* relies on two enormous imaginative leaps, as Wyndham brought together two ideas from two of his previously unpublished books. The first will be chillingly familiar to anyone who has experienced the popular excitement generated by a solar eclipse or anything similar. An unexpected and spectacular meteorite shower has a devastating aftermath: soon after everyone who has witnessed what appeared to be the beautiful and hard to ignore display of green shooting stars is suddenly struck blind.

The second twist is the Triffids themselves, bizarre giant walking plants apparently the result of a Soviet bioengineering experiment and seemingly released into the wild by accident, before the catastrophe has even occurred. It is this odd combination of man-made scientific mishaps that gives the Triffids, who have a fatal sting, their opportunity to potentially usurp the now hopelessly enfeebled human race as the world’s dominant species. It is implied later that the ‘meteor shower’ too is probably a result of biological warfare, perhaps released accidentally by satellite. Oddly prescient as Wyndham was writing years before any man-made satellites even existed.

The book’s hero Bill Masen, a Triffid expert is ‘lucky’ enough to have been temporarily blinded by one of the plants shortly before the mass simultaneous blinding of almost everyone else occurs. His eyes are bandaged and recovering as virtually every other human is blinded: he wakes up to find the chilling consequences of this disaster in hospital the next day.

The book was a huge success. A radio version appeared in 1957 and there was talk of a film in the 1950s, but this never came to anything. Finally, in 1963, three years after the release of the film of Wyndham’s *The Midwich Cuckoos*, the movie of *The Day of the Triffids* appeared.

The film promised much. “Beware the Triffids,” screamed the poster, “They grow... know... walk... talk... stalk and KILL!” The adaptation of “the greatest science fiction novel of all time!” was to appear in colour and would star future *Dynasty* actor Howard Keel (then best known for *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*) as Bill Masen.

The film is, to be fair, a mixed bag. The effects and the Triffids themselves are not actually too badly realised by the standards of the time, but as Simon Clark, author of the 21st Century Triffids sequel *The Night of the Triffids* admits, “the film is dated and the Triffid models just don’t compare to the special effects of today”. Some were annoyed by changes to the original story – Masen is a US sailor in this one rather than a British Triffid scientist, and the character of Josella (saved from blindness by an extended hangover in the book) never appears at all. ►

THE FILM PROMISED MUCH. “BEWARE THE TRIFFIDS,” SCREAMED THE POSTER, “THEY GROW... KNOW... WALK... TALK... STALK AND KILL!”



WYNDHAM: UNSCREENED

Don't be fooled: not everything John Wyndham was immediately transformed into either an epic TV serial or movie. Far from it. Indeed, half a century on, many of even his most major works remain stubbornly unfilmed. We can only ask... why? Here are some – although far from all – of his unfilmed works.

[1953]

THE KRAKEN WAKES



Ask anyone who knows anything about Wyndham and they'll usually mention Kraken in the same breath as Triffids or Midwich. Beginning gradually with some meteorites apparently harmlessly falling into the sea, it soon becomes clear aliens are active underwater as a result and are gradually adapting the ocean depths to their own needs. Humanity reacts aggressively by dropping atomic bombs on them but the aliens fight back, melting the polar ice caps with disastrous results. Despite spawning two major radio series (in 1954 and 1998), filmmakers have thus far avoided producing a screen version of Wyndham's Triffids follow-up, perhaps fearful of encountering the water-based problems which bedevilled the directors of Titanic and Waterworld. As author Simon Clark has noted, "[it] has a terrific story but would require a huge budget to film scenes where the entire world is flooded."

[1955]

THE CHRYSALIDS



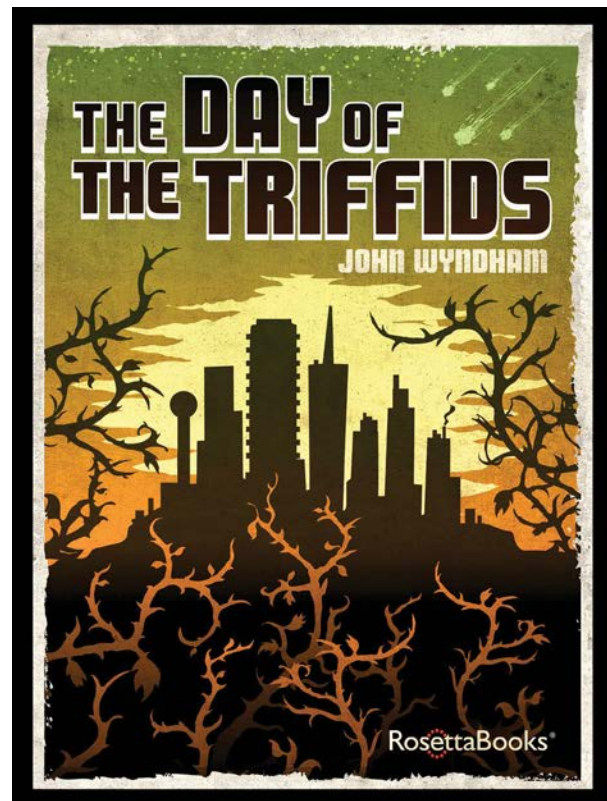
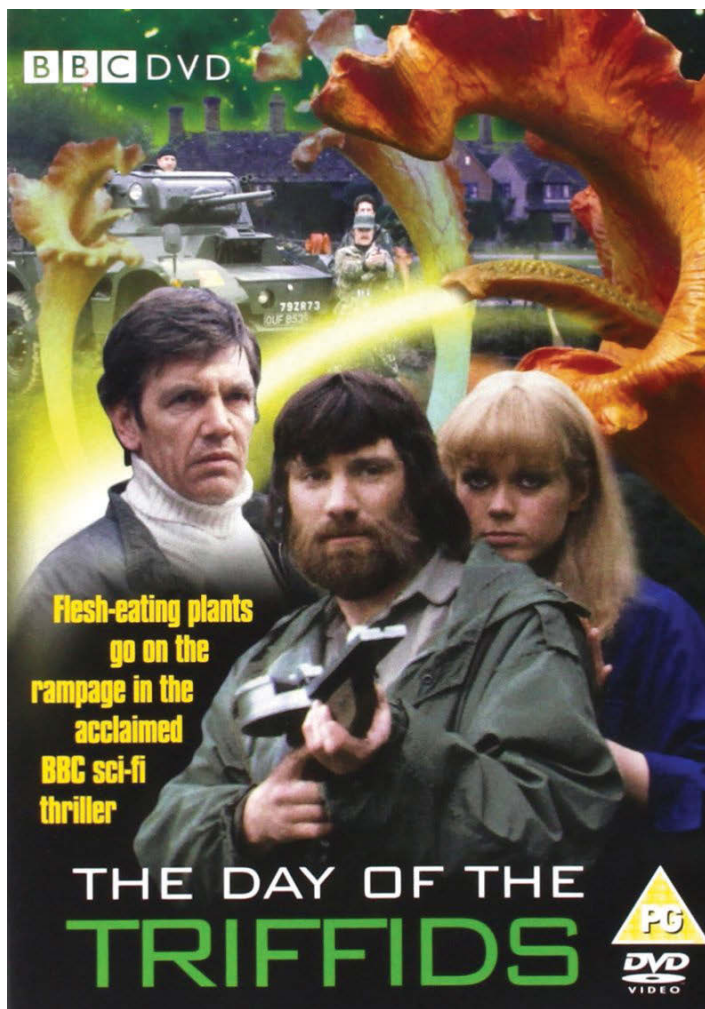
A real departure for Wyndham, this is set in the far future on a world apparently recovering from the aftermath of a nuclear war (a very real fear indeed by 1955). Society has now moved in a fanatically religious direction with anyone suffering mutations (webbed feet, an extra finger and the like) potentially facing punishment by death. So when the young of a particular community discover that they are developing telepathic powers, they soon find themselves facing a terrible dilemma. This remains perhaps the most popular Wyndham novel of all and it remains a total mystery why *The Chrysalids* it has never been filmed (a film was once planned but never happened). Indeed, in the wake of the success of post-apocalyptic teen dramas like *The Hunger Games*, *The Maze Runner* and *Divergent*, now would be the perfect time for a big screen version of *The Chrysalids*. Hollywood, are you listening?

[1960]

TROUBLE WITH LICHEN



This novel focuses on the consequences of the discovery by a female scientist that a chemical extracted from lichen could potentially lead to an expansion of the human lifespan by several hundred years. Although undeniably a compelling and thought provoking read, the novel is generally rather lacking in action and drama. The potentially disastrous consequences of the discovery are discussed in the book, rather than fully realised. It is thus not hard to see why it has never been filmed.



The Triffids' origins are also different and altogether more alien, arriving as spores during an earlier meteor shower, a little like in Invasion of the Bodysnatchers. On the other hand, some changes, notably a dramatic scene in which a passenger plane is thrown into chaos after everyone on board is suddenly hit by the blindness, arguably enhanced the action of the book.

"I saw the film as a child," Simon Clark remembers, "its horror seemed so immediate and real, because I could picture being struck blind, even if I couldn't envisage being attacked by carnivorous plants. I could so easily imagine the terror and despair of not being able to see."

Few liked the film's silly feel good ending, however, in which it emerges that the Triffids dissolve easily in salty seawater. Wyndham was an admirer of HG Wells but it seems unlikely he appreciated this War of the Worlds style modification. He would not live to see the next screen version of his story.

The 1981 BBC series, adapted by Douglas Livingstone, remains the most faithful attempt to bring the Triffids to the screen to date. As with many of the best adaptations its success lies less in the fact that it remains wholly true to the letter of events in the novel, but in the fact that it is closest to the book in spirit.

For all that, there's no denying that this series too, though remarkably watchable, has also dated. As Charlie Brooker put it in a 2006 review, "It's undeniably silly, with inadvertently funny FX... (and) some alarmingly stiff performances," before adding, "...get beyond all that, and you'll discover that at its core lurks a tale of startling bleakness, the likes of which rarely makes it on screen in this mollycoddled day and age."

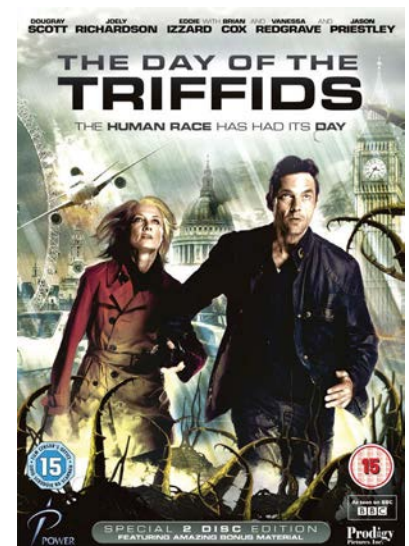
In the light of this, the failure of the 2009 TV mini-series starring Dougray Scott and Joely Richardson was all the more disappointing. In this version the Triffids have first developed in the jungle, although man has kept them under captive to exploit them for their oil, something we are told has 'saved the world from global warming'. The Triffids only get loose as a result of the misguided actions of an eco-terrorist (Ewen

Bremner) in the chaos following the blinding. He gets eaten as a result, both he and the Triffids getting their just desserts.

It would be wrong to dismiss all the changes – which include the introduction of a new villain played by Eddie Izzard – yet ultimately it's hard not to feel the 2009 version is lacking in subtlety. The 'light show' which precipitates the disaster is heavily anticipated in the media in this one, thus ruling out the strong probability that it is an unexpected man-made disaster as in the book and earlier versions. The blinding itself is less gradual too: it occurs instantly as a consequence of a sudden solar flare style flash.

Some bits are also just silly: Richardson's character seems surprised her mobile phone no longer works after the disaster while Izzard's character surviving a plane crash simply by stealing all the safety jackets from his blind co-passengers and then placing them around him, also seems daft. The results pleased few. Dated as it is, for most, the 1981 series remains the best screen version of Triffids to date.

When you've had such a success as the original 1981 The Triffids, why spoil it with a remake?



THE **VILLAGE** PEOPLE

THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS

BOOK // 1957, MICHAEL JOSEPH

THE VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

FILM // 1960, MGM [REMADE 1995 BY UNIVERSAL]

CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED

FILM // 1963, MGM

Few films of the early Sixties were more terrifying than *The Bloodening*. The film saw four children with rather curious English accents, glowing eyes and psychic powers terrorising their village by revealing confidential secrets (“Doctor, we know that you and the bootblack have been rogering the fishwife in the crumpet shop”) and even forcing the villagers to attack themselves. A trailer warned “A registered nurse trained in the treatment of terror will be on duty during the showing.”

As you may have guessed *The Bloodening* was never actually a real film at all but a parody of the 1960 film *The Village of the Damned* from a 1999 episode of *The Simpsons* (Homer interprets the film as stating: “The moral of the story is the adults always win!”)

The film is derived from *The Midwich Cuckoos*, Wyndham’s 1957 novel. The story begins in the sleepy fictional village of Midwich, an area which becomes sleepier still after the entire population is rendered mysteriously unconscious for one day. The army is alerted after it becomes clear no one, animals or people alike, can enter within two

miles around the village without passing out. All return to normal if they are retrieved (the narrator regains consciousness after being dragged out with a hook), but the mystery remains unsolved when the villagers suddenly return to consciousness – confused, bewildered and apparently unchanged – the following day.

In fact, the villagers are fundamentally changed, or at least about half of them are. It soon emerges that every female has suddenly become pregnant overnight, a development that undeniably proves awkward in many cases. All the mothers end up giving birth to eerily similar looking, somewhat Aryan, blonde children (or ‘Children’ – note the capital letter) who soon develop at an alarmingly accelerated rate and have telepathic powers. They also are clearly evil and become a problem which the village soon has to address. As author and Wyndham fan Simon Clark points out, “the notion that your own children are actually dangerous alien ‘cuckoos’ in our homes really burrows deep into the fear centres of our brain.”

The Village of the Damned which starred George Sanders (a well-known actor, perhaps best known for voicing the tiger Shere Khan in *The Jungle Book* today) was the first Wyndham novel to reach the big screen, and fifty six years on might actually be the best. Fidelity to the book is not essential to a good adaptation, but happily the black and white film manages to be largely faithful while furthermore proving both a critical and surprise box office success. “Beware the stare that will paralyze the will of the world,” exclaimed the poster, but beyond the hype, probably the most significant change is the title. The implication of the original title was clear. Cuckoos are known for laying their eggs in the nests of other birds. An alien species has clearly laid its eggs in the (ahem) ‘nests’ of the women of Midwich. But the film’s makers (perhaps the director Wolf Rilla) were possibly fearful that it might be mistaken for a documentary about birds. ▶



**ALL THE MOTHERS END UP
GIVING BIRTH TO EERILY
SIMILAR LOOKING, SOMEWHAT
ARYAN, BLONDE CHILDREN**

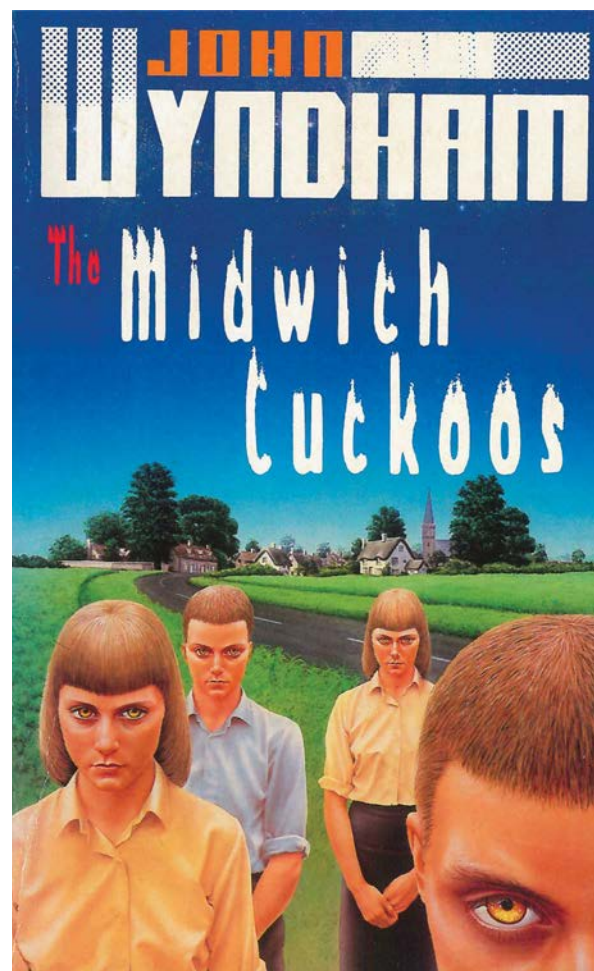




Wyndham had begun a book sequel, *The Midwich Main*, but abandoned it early on. This did not stop a film sequel being produced in 1964, with the title *Children of the Damned*. A title that actually works for both movies. Opinions are divided as to its merits, which starred the then rising star Ian Hendry, but the premise is certainly interesting with the Children sympathetically portrayed as they are initially studied by a team of scientists keen to establish whether they are human or not. Simon Clark has described it as ‘a neglected classic’, and it undoubtedly benefitted from a better than expected script from American screenwriter John Briley, who would later win an Oscar for *Gandhi*. There would be no more adaptations of the book for another thirty years.

The wait would not be worth it. The new version of the film would also be called *Village of the Damned*. Unlike the 1960 film it would be in colour (unsurprising as it was now 1995) and was set in the United States. The cast were all reasonably well known, such as Christopher Reeve (in his last role before his riding accident), Mark Hamill, Kirstie Alley and *Crocodile Dundee* star Linda Kozlowski. None were at the peaks of their career. The same may be said of John Wyndham adaptation, thanks to his early successes with *Halloween*, *The Fog* and *The Thing*, but certainly enduring a long slump in his career by the 1990s.

Oddly, aside from the lack of passion which Carpenter freely admits to a film which he regarded as ‘a contractual assignment’, the 1990’s *Village of the Damned* suffers less from being unfaithful to the source material than from not updating things enough, the sole real exception being the increased role of women in the story. More of a remake of the 1960 film than a reworking of the book, the whole thing just seems woefully out of time in a world by now more attuned to the high tech special effects of *Jurassic Park* or *Stargate*. Some iffy acting performances and Carpenter’s attempts to crank up the horror don’t help.



A BOY'S LIFE

CHOCKY

BOOK // 1968, MICHAEL JOSEPH

TV // CHOCKY 1984, THAMES / CHOCKY'S CHILDREN 1985, THAMES / CHOCKY'S CHALLENGE, 1986, THAMES

There were lots of great things to enjoy on Children's ITV in the mid-1980s. There was Supergran, about the adventures of a geriatric accidentally imbued with super powers and Educating Marmalade in which the late Charlotte Coleman played an anarchic schoolgirl. There was also Chocky, a thought provoking and genuinely disturbing science fiction thriller about a boy who may or may not have a hyper intelligent alien communicating to him through his brain.

It is the last of these, of course, which drew inspiration from the work of John Wyndham. In what would prove to be one of his last novels, in fact expanded from an earlier short story, both versions centre on Matthew Gore whose behaviour becomes an increasing concern to his parents after he develops an obsession with what appears to be an imaginary friend. With Matthew increasingly behaving in a manner which suggests either that he is in contact with a hyper intelligent alien being or is suffering from schizophrenia, there was enough ambiguity in the TV series to make it an unusually troubling programme for such a timeslot. We get a feel of his parents' growing sense of helplessness as Matthew has increasingly heated

arguments, apparently with himself. Two inferior TV sequels followed: Chocky's Children and Chocky's Challenge. It is difficult to imagine such a drama being screened on children's TV today.

Half a century or more after his heyday, John Wyndham remains as widely read as ever. A Triffids sequel, The Night of the Triffids, written by Simon Clark was published in 2001. A new film version of The Day of the Triffids helmed by veteran director Mike Newell has been proposed and there has been talk (admittedly no more recently than 2008) of Steven Spielberg bringing Chocky to the big screen.

Ultimately, however, it may prove to be the case that Wyndham's writing proves most vividly realised not in direct adaptations of his novels but in the films and series that borrow heavily from his works. In Danny Boyle's zombie drama 28 Days Later from 2002, no sequence is more memorable than the early scenes which see the film's hero emerging from hospital to find a seemingly abandoned London, apparently deserted after some seemingly unimaginable tragedy. Boyle managed to film the streets of the usually thriving metropolis in such a desolate state, by deploying the simple trick of filming early in the morning. But the scene scripted by Alex Garland, will, of course, be instantly recognisable to anyone who has read Triffids. Little wonder the 'waking up in hospital to discover an apocalypse' trick was recycled again for another zombie drama, the opening episode of US TV juggernaut The Walking Dead in 2010.

A blinded world. Telepathic children. Walking killer plants. Like a Triffid's sting, John Wyndham's books have certainly hit their mark. "Cosy catastrophes" they are not. **GM**



Many a teatime was spoiled in the 1980s with the unsettling series Chocky on iTV.

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON [1981]

written & directed by
JOHN LANDIS

featuring

DAVID NAUGHTON // DAVID KESSLER
JENNY AGUTTER // NURSE ALEX PRICE
GRIFFIN DUNNE // JACK GOODMAN

Although starring two young American actors, David Naughton and Griffin Dunne, 1981's *An American Werewolf in London* is very much a gritty, rainsoaked British film. In this classic scene the two backpackers stumble upon a pub in the dark – The Slaughtered Lamb. Noticing the five-pointed star on the wall they ask the locals about it – everything stops and they are not happy with their curiosity. Feeling uncomfortable, the two begin to leave, but the landlady tells the locals they, “Can’t let them go.” This prompts the men playing games to deliver the classic line below. Needless to say, it’s a gorefest from here on in with some award winning special werewolf effects that John Landis would go on to use again in Michael Jackson’s *Thriller*. Cameo spotters will be interested to see a young Rik Mayall minding his own business at the back of the pub.

“STAY ON THE
ROAD. KEEP CLEAR
OF THE MOORS.
BEWARE THE
MOON, LADS.”

DARTS AND CHESS PLAYERS IN THE
SLAUGHTERED LAMB PUB





GET THIS

WHILE STRANGE WOMEN LYING IN PONDS DISTRIBUTING SWORDS MAY BE NO BASIS FOR A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, NERF GUNS WOULD BE A WHOLE OTHER MATTER...

Nerf MEGA Mastodon

\$80 (£53) // AVAILABLE AUTUMN

There are some pretty amazing Nerf guns on the market, not to mention a burgeoning modding scene, so we were pretty excited when Hasbro recently revealed its 2016 Nerf line-up. Ladies and gentleman, we give you the wonderfully named Mega Mastodon. This awesome blaster is part shotgun, part SMG and part minigun with a battery powered drum magazine enabling you to pin your enemies under a hail of projectiles. More firing, less reloading – the key to a happy life.

You can't get your hands on the Mega Mastodon just yet as it doesn't go on sale until the Autumn, which gives you a few months to save up.



QMX Kirk and Spock Figures

£TBA // QMXONLINE.COM

Any new action figures need to have a wow factor. These Kirk and Spock figures, recently revealed at the New York Toy Fair, have certainly got it. They're 1/6th scale, standing around 12" tall, and they look stunning. The outfits and accessories – phasers and communicators – are wonderfully realised but it's the facial detail that makes you stop and stare. QMX has channelled the essence of Shatner and Nimoy.



Anchorman's Sex Panther

£30 // FIREBOX.COM

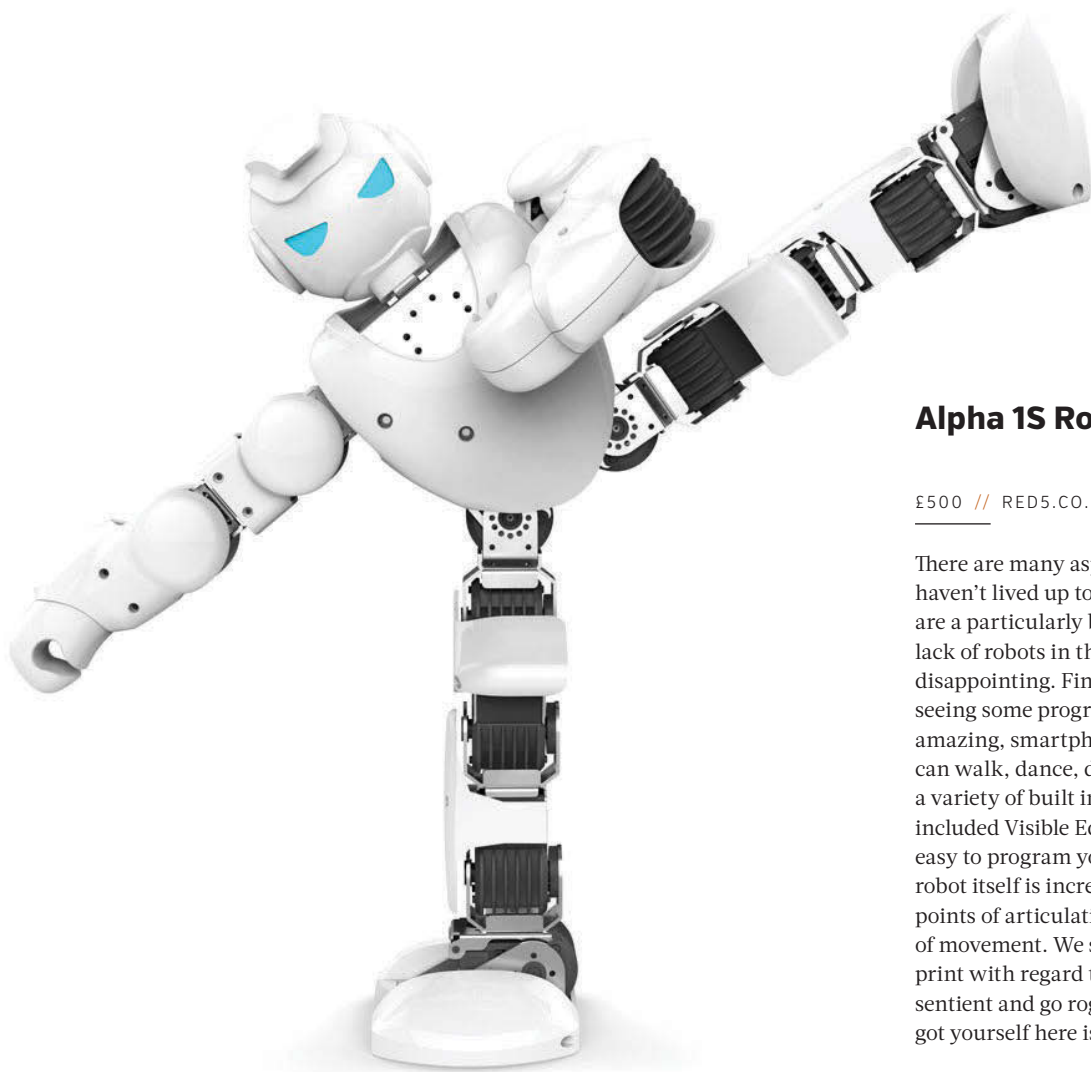
"It's called Sex Panther by Odeon. It's illegal in nine countries... Yep, it's made with bits of real panther, so you know it's good. They've done studies, you know. 60% of the time, it works every time." The manliest fragrance in the world is now available to you. For less than £30 you can own the cologne that awed Ron Burgundy. So splash some on and let's go see if we can make this little kitty purr.



Twelfth Doctor's Sonic Screwdriver Universal

£80 // FIREBOX.COM

The Wand Company has produced a range of remote devices based on the Sonic Screwdriver and Star Trek phaser among other things. It's now updated its Sonic Screwdriver for the twelfth Doctor and it's really the business. The build quality is great with a real premium feel and programming it is really easy, enabling you to control your TV and other devices with simple gestures. No fan should be without one.



Alpha 1S Robot

£500 // RED5.CO.UK

There are many aspects of the 21st Century that haven't lived up to expectations. Flying cars are a particularly big miss, and the distinct lack of robots in the world is also deeply disappointing. Finally though we're actually seeing some progress on the latter, with this amazing, smartphone-controlled robot who can walk, dance, do tai-chi and perform a variety of built in movements, while the included Visible Editing Software makes it very easy to program your own movements. The robot itself is incredibly flexible with multiple points of articulation enabling a huge variety of movement. We suggest you check the small print with regard to what to do should it become sentient and go rogue. Failing that, what you've got yourself here is one amazing bit of tech.



Judge Dredd & Lawmaster Set

£200 // FORBIDDENPLANET.COM

This is the Dredd figure and Lawmaster set Dredd fans have been waiting for. The Dredd figure is really nice with great articulation. The detail on the figure, from weathering on his boots to that iconic jaw are great. The Lawmaster is packed with cool sound and lighting effects including front and rear lights, machine guns and even the instrument console lights up. It's the perfect marriage of badass and badass machine.



Game of Thrones Longclaw Sword of Jon Snow

\$250 [£164] // THINKGEEK.COM

Here's your chance to wield Jon Snow's sword, the mighty Longclaw, and this replica is worth every penny of the asking price. Made from stainless steel, the blade is easy to maintain. All you need to do is wipe it down to keep it free of finger prints and dust (or blood). The hilt is leatherbound and the wolf's head is also metal, giving it a really authentic feel. It comes with a plaque inscribed with the Night's Watch oath.



Harley Quinn Leg Lamp

\$40 [£26] // ENTERTAINMENTEARTH.COM

Everybody's favourite psycho chick will be tearing it up in Suicide Squad this summer, but if you're a fan of the old school DC depiction of Harleen Quinzel rather than the St Trinians reject from Suicide Squad, this unmistakable lamp will light up your life. The stand is Harley's leg while the shade is instantly recognisable. It takes a 40-watt bulb and stands 20" in height.

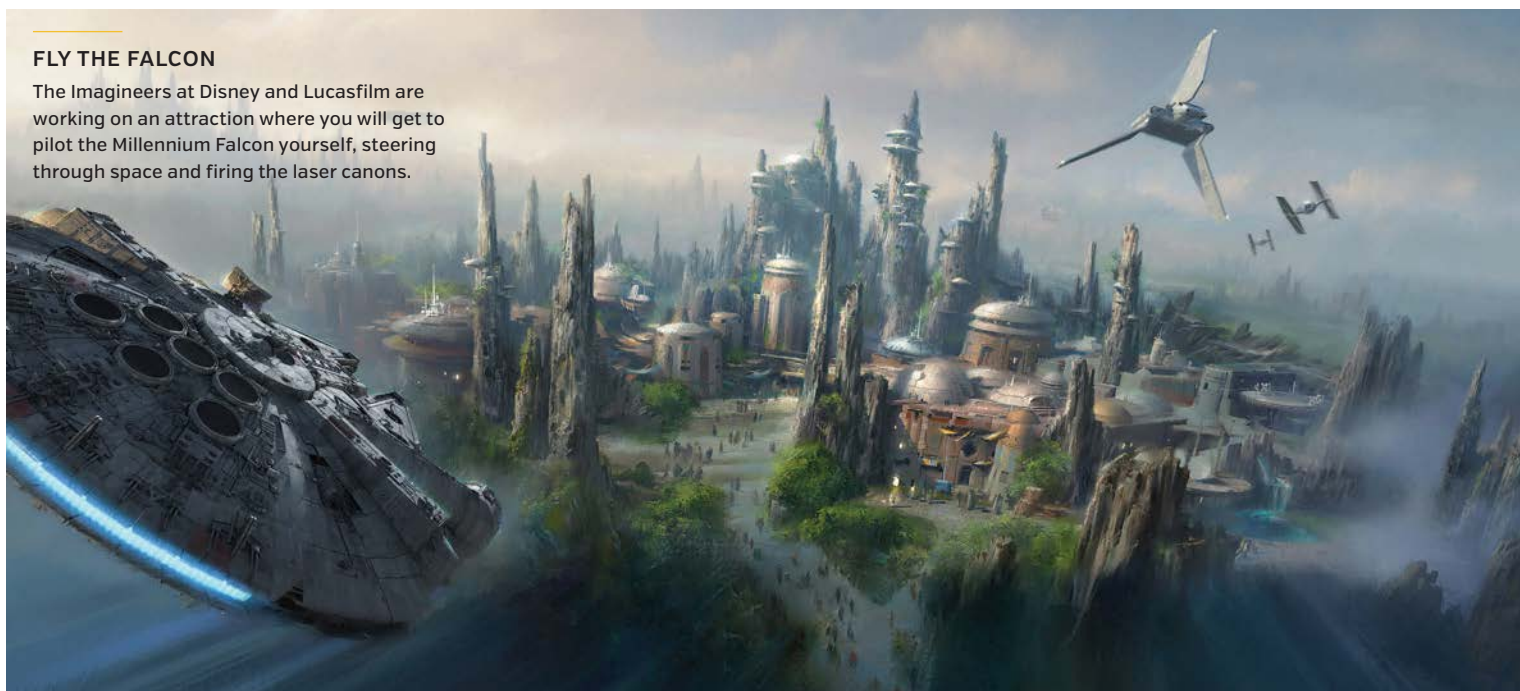
STAR WARS

DISNEYFICATION

THE HOUSE OF MOUSE HAS BIG PLANS FOR STAR WARS, AND HAS STARTED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWO STAR WARS LANDS. ONE AT DISNEYLAND IN CALIFORNIA AND ONE AT DISNEY WORLD IN FLORIDA. LET'S FIND OUT WHAT'S IN STORE...

FLY THE FALCON

The Imagineers at Disney and Lucasfilm are working on an attraction where you will get to pilot the Millennium Falcon yourself, steering through space and firing the laser canons.



"AWESOME"

On the announcement of the still-to-be-named 'Star Wars Land', Harrison Ford was quoted as saying, "Star Wars is, for lack of a better word, awesome. I'm so blessed that I got to be a part of it, to walk in these iconic locations, and soon you'll be able to do that as well. Not in a galaxy far, far away, but close to home."





STAR WARS TRADING

Part of the experience will be visiting a remote trading port – one of the last stops before wild space. Star Wars characters will come to life and you will interact with their stories. You will even get to have a drink in the Mos Eisley Cantina.

“GUESTS WILL BE TRANSPORTED TO A NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN PLANET”

DISNEY



CLIMB ABOARD

Step up the ramp and explore the inside of the Millennium Falcon for yourself. Play a game of Dejarik – but make sure you let the Wookiee win!

NOT SO FAR, FAR AWAY...

Of course, Star Wars has been an essential part of the Disney theme park experience for many years. The original R2-D2 and C3PO have greeted fans at Disneyland's Star Tours since 1986, and starting from 4 April Stormtroopers will march from the Star Wars Launch Bay store to the centre stage every day.



On the centre stage at Disney's Hollywood Studios in Florida, a new live stage show has just launched starring popular characters Chewbacca, Darth Maul, Kylo Ren and of course Darth Vader. The show is running multiple times each day and is located near to The Great Movie Ride.



Then this Summer Disney will launch their most ambitious fireworks, lasers and projection show ever. Star Wars: A Galactic Spectacular is a feast of Star Wars-themed music, characters and scenes, played out in the skies above Disney's Hollywood Studios.



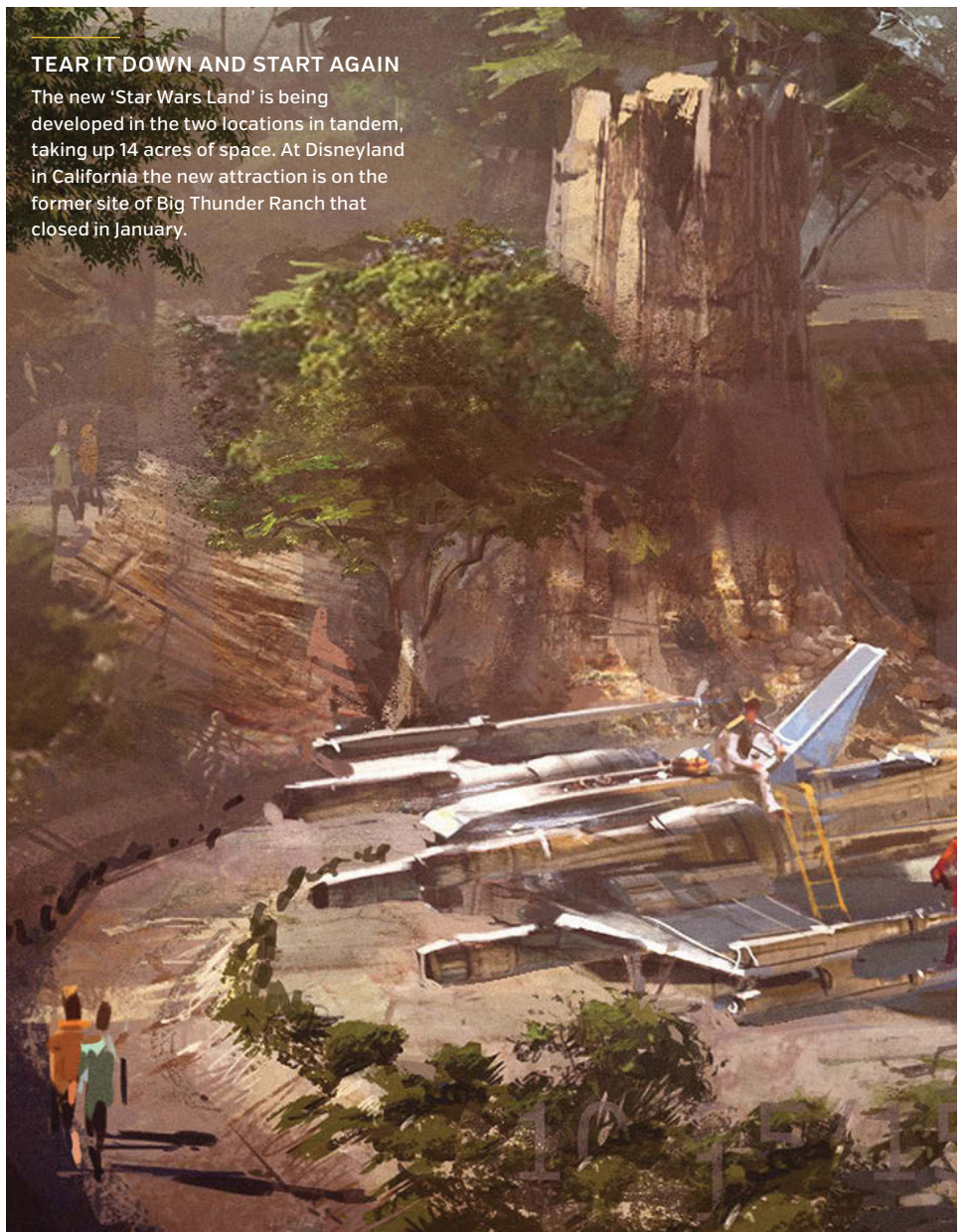
BATTLE OF THE PLANETS

Visitors will find themselves caught in the middle of a tense battle between Resistance fighters and stormtroopers as the First Order arrive on the planet and cause havoc.



TEAR IT DOWN AND START AGAIN

The new 'Star Wars Land' is being developed in the two locations in tandem, taking up 14 acres of space. At Disneyland in California the new attraction is on the former site of Big Thunder Ranch that closed in January.





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KISS, KISS, BOOM, BANG!

NAME HARLEY QUINN (HARLEEN QUINZEL) // **FIRST APPEARANCE** BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES [1992]



Ranked 16th in the Comics Buyer's Guide "100 Sexiest Women in Comics", Harley Quinn has been a cover star on many comics, and put up a strong fight in the game Injustice: Gods Among Us (top).





HARLEY QUINN

PUCKER UP PUDDIN' BECAUSE YOU'RE IN FOR A WILD RIDE WITH THE DC UNIVERSE'S CRAZIEST GAL AND QUEEN OF COSPLAY, THE ONE AND ONLY HARLEY QUINN!

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Multi coloured hair, a baseball bat, clown makeup and a sometimes jester get-up. Thanks to a potion from Poison Ivy she now possesses a healing factor, enhanced strength, speed and agility making her an all-round badass.

WHERE IS SHE NOW?

If you're looking for a quick fix of Harley then look no further than the pages of New Suicide Squad, where you'll find her appearing alongside Deadshot, Amanda Waller and Captain Boomerang.



Let's be honest, if you find yourself at any sort of comic convention you're bound to bump into someone dressed in full Harley Quinn garb. Some are good and some bad. Thankfully the good ones far outweigh the clunkers, which is probably why she's one of the most commonly touted character get-ups around.

Created for the Batman Animated TV series by DC Comics scribe Paul Dini, and producer Bruce Timm, Harley has become a mainstay of the DC Universe. She appears in comics, videogames, cartoons and, later this year in Suicide Squad, feature films. Introduced back in 1992 solely for the episode Joker's Favour, audiences gravitated towards her so much that she was written into subsequent episodes, while also appearing in the comic book spin-off of the series.

Dini has said in previous interviews about the character that Harley's look was inspired by the actress Arleen Sorkin, who appeared in an episode of the long running soap, Days of Our Lives, wearing a jester costume. In fact, Dini and his cohorts went one step further and hired Sorkin to voice the part for the cartoon, and comic book history was made.

Her original origin story was established in the episode Mad Love, wherein she quickly falls in love with The Joker in Arkham Asylum after he lures her in with a tragic tale from his past and she helps him escape. In the DC Universe she comes from a broken home, her brother a deadbeat with children to multiple mothers, and her father a criminal conman famous for swindling rich women out of their money. In this particular iteration Harley chooses to become a psychologist in a bid to better understand why her father did the things he did to his family.

She soon finds herself descending down a dark path when she tricks her boyfriend, Guy, into murdering an innocent man. When Guy can't handle the guilt, he soon begins to break and asks Harley to end his suffering by taking his life. Harley obliges and disguises the murder as suicide. She soon begins to crack herself, believing the universe to be in a constant state of chaos. Repressing these feelings of sorrow and guilt, she finds herself drawn to The Joker, and quickly finds a job at Arkham Asylum where she helps him escape.

Regardless of her differing origin fables, Harley Quinn is arguably one of the most iconic villains in comic book history, let alone the DC Universe. She's up there with the likes of The Joker and Catwoman, and destined to remain a fixture of pop culture for eons to come. **GM**

"CALL ME HARLEY. EVERYBODY DOES!"

COSPLAYER // IZABEL CORTEZ

Izabel Cortez, just like her character, lives a double life. A secretary by weekdays and a cosplayer by weekends, mostly at events for the comic and geeks at heart. She started cosplaying in 2009 when an opportunity allowed her to try out this hobby that harnesses the creative skills that run through her blood.

LOVES CHOCOLATES, COLORS AND CATS!

DISLIKES DISORDER, BORING AND LIARS

Javi Claire
PHOTOGRAPHY







WITH ONE EYE ON THE PAGE, WE KEEP THE OTHER ON RECENT HAPPENINGS IN THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY...

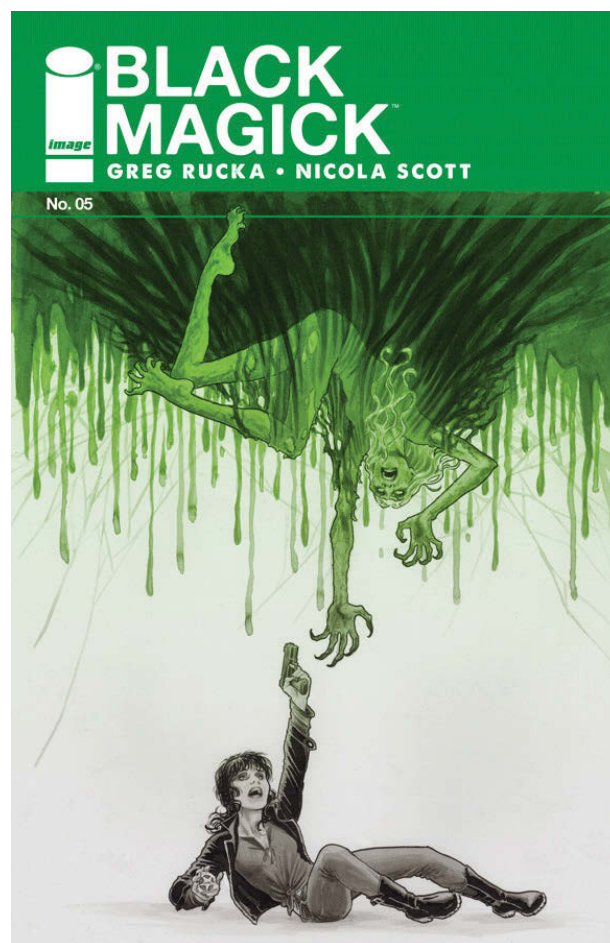
Words: MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Michael is a freelance journalist, who no longer remembers a time before comics occupied all his time.

Second Sight #1 marked the beginning of yet another gripping yarn from AfterShock Comics. It's actually becoming difficult to keep up with their inability to put a foot wrong. This series particularly should appeal to fans of grimy, UK-influenced Vertigo, continuing their trend towards a consistently impressive output.

Distinguished by seriously dark subject matter, David Hine's lead character Ray Pilgrim, is a former sleuth with a unique ability to slip into the mind of killers. Becoming a celebrity due to his skills, he would find himself on the fringes of society when accused of being a killer himself. In the present, his daughter is investigating child abuses cases, reviving Pilgrim's dark history. It's a little like *Manhunter* if penned acidly by Grant Morrison, brought to life by Alberto Ponticelli's angular artwork. Filled with grubby, stripped-down menace, it's a style that brings to mind the equally disturbing *Nailbiter*. This was a brilliant debut issue.

Meanwhile, *The Dark and Bloody* #1 marked yet another addition to the growing Vertigo cannon of horror titles. The volume of dark and bloody reads on shelves right now is pretty incredible. Rarely before has such a diverse and effective range of horror books all been available at one time. The first issue of this Kentucky based jaunt into rural fear differed by establishing protagonist Iris Gentry, more than the horror. It feels like this book will require patience, but that will pay off hugely. In the meantime, Scott Godlewski's cinematic artwork should provide more than enough to drool over.



The underrated Boom! Studios delivered *Kennel Block Blues* #1, a confident and unique parody of prison clichés, from writer Ryan Ferrier and artist Daniel Bayliss. It's the sort of comic that could slip under the radar of many readers, but is much too sharp and witty to warrant that fate. *Blues* is as inventive and amusing a parody as one could hope for, focusing on Oliver, a dog placed on Death row in Jackson Kennel. Following his first day adjusting to life as an inmate, readers are invited to witness his experience through the harsh reality of prison life, but also the nutty delusions Oliver suffers, which seem to be some sort of coping mechanism. This is a wacky amalgamation of tones that you'll likely not see anywhere else.

MARVEL CONTINUED TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF THE SEARINGLY HOT IMPRESSION CREATED ON TELEVISION THROUGH THEIR NETFLIX SERIES

Further delving into the expanded *Hellboy* universe, *Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. 1953: Beyond the Fences* #1 proved there's still much life to Mike Mignola's head-space. Handled capably by the creative team of Chris Roberson and Paolo Rivera, *Beyond the Fences* premiered with a new mystery, and although this was very much a tense scene-setting effort, it's certainly a juicy premise.



[COMIC OF THE MONTH]

Justice League

STORY, GEOFF JOHNS // ART, JASON FABOK
PUBLISHER, DC COMICS

DC continues to endure mixed fortunes in the presentation of their key characters, with results ranging from the pant-staining greatness of Scott Snyder's Batman, to the ham-fisted dirge of Wonder Woman.

Justice League, however, is currently bringing together top stars in a refreshingly exciting fashion, thanks to Geoff Johns and Jason Fabok's epic storytelling. Issue #48 continued 'The Darkseid War', as we head towards the inevitable end of the line, prior to DC's latest reboot Rebirth. If the relaunched book is half as exciting as this title, they're on to a winner.

Marvel continued to reap the benefits of the searingly hot impression created on television through their Netflix series. Power Man and Iron Fist debuted very strongly indeed.

Also, Tom King's excellent solo series Vision turned on the taps in the fourth issue before spiralling into #5 in dramatic, tragic fashion. King will be leaving the book as of the twelfth issue under an exclusive contract to DC, but his work thus far has been a huge high note for the company. Marvel was surprised by the success of this title, but it's something of a miracle that a character only recently introduced into the cinematic universe has been handled with such relevance and social conscience on the printed page.

At Image one of their most consistent ongoing books, Descender, reached its tenth issue, introducing new key characters. As usual though, it's the textures in Dustin Nguyen's visuals that bring the thrills and scope to this good natured space tale.

The company also hit a home run with the Black Magick #5. One of the most visually arresting titles on stands, it boasts genuinely beautiful Nicola Scott artwork, which seemingly reaches new peaks every month. Greg Rucka's character work within is nothing short of superb too, deserving of transcending the book's status as a supernatural detective tale. This work is actually something genuinely really special. Issue #5 also boasted a variant cover by Stephanie Hans that ranks among the best of the year thus far. **GM**



IN THE ART SEAT

RYAN K. LINDSAY, WRITER [NEGATIVE SPACE, CHUM, HEADSPACE]



When did your interest in comic books first begin, and what books do you remember influencing you as a youngster? Oh, man, it was day one. I grew up with older brothers reading comics so I can remember diving into 80's Marvel quality like Claremont's X-Men, and his Wolverine mini with Frank Miller. I was bought a reprint of Vault of Horror #1 very young and my own collection began. From EC reprints to the first Bongo Bartman mini to

all the Venom minis, I slowly built my brain-scape up.

How did you end up breaking into the industry? I wrote a lot of rubbish that no one cared about. Then I made my own comics, slowly, over time. Which meant I had something to show to Editors, whom I met at conventions, mostly. I went to ECCA a week after my daughter was born and it was a great trip for meeting people, and having various lovely people go out of their way to introduce me to others. That helped a lot. And then I just kept on writing.

You've tended to veer towards producing your own creator owned material... what notable pros and cons stand out for you in terms of the process? The big pro is you and the team are in control. You can go as wild as you want, you can control your deadlines, and you aren't beholden to continuity or the legalese of larger corporations. The cons are the fact your slice of the market is fractional, that you have to bankroll it mostly yourself, and that it can feel like endless screaming into the void. But I do very much dig it overall.

Negative Space in particular has met with much praise from readers.

How did the concept come about and why do you think it's resonated so strongly? The concept started as the first page, a writer getting writer's block on his suicide note, and then I started peeling the story around that. As for why it's landed so well, I think it's mostly because of the insanely talented work from artist Owen Gieni, and then it's because it's a big sci-fi epic that's really just about emotion, and that we deal with it through emotional honesty. A lot of depressed and suicidal people have reached out to me to express gratitude to the way I'm handling the topic, which is the highest praise I can ever imagine.

At the heart of the book is the theme of depression – is this a subject you feel strongly about, and do you think it's important to see subjects such as this confronted in the medium? I absolutely think writing and art need to be about something. There's a time to switch off the brain and just enjoy but a lot of the time I'd rather tackle something meaty through a narrative. I want subtext, I want challenging ideas, I want something I can talk about for hours with someone else. And depression is a silent killer, it's insidious, so any chance we get to kick it swiftly in the nether regions, well... we have to take that opportunity.

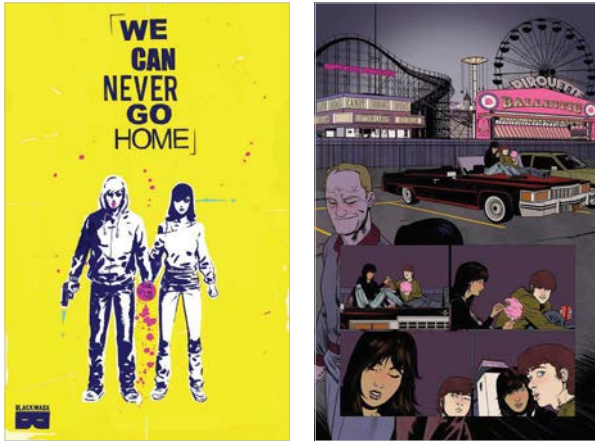
What else have you lined up that readers can expect to see this year? I have Chum with artist Sami Kivela, which is a surf-noir miniseries launching with ComixTribe in April. I have two one-shots set to publish through the year, and there will also be more Deer Editor, my anthropomorphic journalism jam with Sami again.

COMIC CRITIQUE

WITH SO MANY EXCELLENT COMICS PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH, WE JUST HAD TO ADD A PAGE OF REVIEWS TO THE KOMIKAZE...

We Can Never Go Home [TRADE PAPERBACK]

STORY, MATTHEW ROSENBERG, PATRICK KINDLON // ART, JOSH HOOD // PUBLISHER, BLACK MASK COMICS

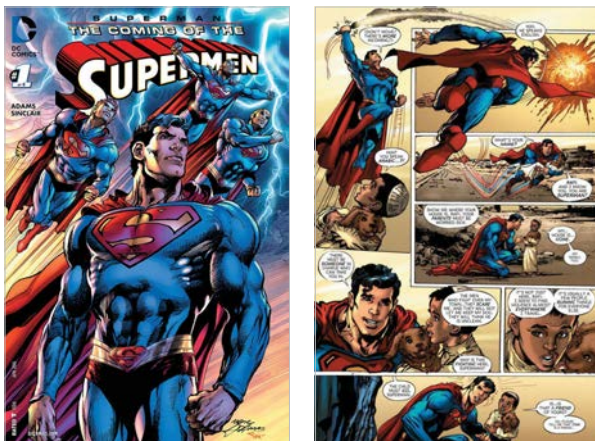


Black Mask created a buzz last year with a slew of innovative books, the best of which was arguably *We Can Never Go Home*. A tale of super-powered misfits on the run, it's a book that combines the concept of 2012 film *Chronicle*, with DIY post-punk aesthetics to scintillating effect. The first collected volume is also loaded with stacks of bonus artwork, making for a tremendous package.

★★★★★

Superman: The Coming of the Supermen

STORY, NEAL ADAMS // ART, NEAL ADAMS
PUBLISHER, DC COMICS



Legendary creator Neal Adams will go down in history as an influential artist of the highest order, but recent ventures into nostalgia such as *Batman: Odyssey* have divided readers. Fortunately, while *The Coming of the Supermen* isn't Adams' best work, it is a loopy, fun re-visitation of the character, boasting fascinating artwork. Hopefully, future scripts are a little tighter.

★★★★★

X-Men: Worst X-Man Ever #1

STORY, MAX BEMIS // ART, MICHAEL WALSH
PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



Removed from continuity, this light-hearted entry aims for a modern, diverse take on nostalgia, but isn't going to bring any sort of new found momentum to the X-Men franchise. It is however, accessible and does offer a few amusing moments. There just isn't any drama here; it feels like a typical mutant re-tread despite a solid creative team.

★★★★★

Star Wars Special: C-3PO #1

STORY, JAMES ROBINSON // ART, TONY HARRIS
PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



Finally, the question of how C-3PO's red arm came to be in *The Force Awakens* is answered courtesy of excellent Starman scribe, James Robinson. Harris may not seem to be an obvious choice of artist, but his high-contrast design work is an utter delight here. And yes, there's a glut of Star Wars tie-ins available right now, but it's hard not to enjoy such an easily digestible dollop as this.

★★★★★

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While visually stunning, Capcom's new Street Fighter seems to be getting a kicking from hardcore fans of the series for all its missing essentials.



[GAME]

Street Fighter V

£38 // PS4/PC
PUBLISHER, CAPCOM

The latest incarnation of Street Fighter gets a lot of things right, but while Capcom may have high hopes that devotees will spend countless hours on end dissecting the new and ultimately extremely interesting V-Trigger system, along with the numerous other noticeable tweaks, it will be probably be quite the opposite, because bizarrely a lot of content has been left on the cutting room floor in this decidedly wafer thin release.

Capcom has made a point of informing fans that Street Fighter V will not be privy to countless re-releases like its predecessor. Instead it will remain in place as a consistently updated live title, much like Grand Theft Auto Online, complete with a number of free and not so free updates. These include balancing patches and playing modes. And yet, despite this we find it extremely unsettling that two of these so-called updates are in fact the standard CPU mode wherein players can battle AI controlled opponents in a simple two out of three round of fisticuffs, and arcade mode. Both are staples of the series since the dawn of its inception back in 1987.

Some might argue that in place of these Capcom has woven in a survival mode as well as an offensively short (and woefully written) story mode that supposedly serves as a prologue for each of the myriad characters vying for your attention, but for the asking price this is simply not enough. CPU bouts and arcade battles are a prerequisite in any fighting game. In Street Fighter V they're not, and this irks us - and no doubt the devoted fans - quite a lot. If single player content is what you're on the hunt for with this latest iteration of the series, then consider looking elsewhere.

Rest assured what is included is exceptionally good, including the aforementioned V-Trigger system, which has replaced the Ultra metre found lurking in Street Fighter IV.

While some may balk at the culling of this nearly decade old brawling perk, the V-System is a worthy successor that allows you to turn the tide of battle in the blink of an eye with either a powerful special move, or a super charged attack once your character's health bar has been sliced in half.

CAPCOM'S LATEST BEAT-'EM-UP SPORTS A WICKEDLY ENGAGING ROSTER OF CHARACTERS

As for the cast, Capcom has shoehorned in a swathe of fan favourites and freshly concocted fighters, including series stalwarts Ryu and Ken, as well as Chun Li and her abnormally bouncy boobs that somehow made it past quality control. Regulars aside, it's the newcomers that offer up some of the most intriguing fighting opportunities, including the brutal Necalli and machine gun fisted Rashid. A personal favourite here at Geeky Monkey Towers, in our late night Street Fighter sessions, has been FANG, a flashy brawler designed almost specifically with ranged attacks in mind as he hurls clouds of purple poisonous gas at you that eat away at your health bar over time.

Yes, Capcom's latest beat-'em-up sports a wickedly engaging roster of characters, while delivering a superb online experience for anyone interested in competitive play, but what it doesn't do is hold its own against other fighting games out there in terms of content. Unless Capcom is willing to rectify this situation, the casual Street Fighter fan may not stick around too long post-release. **GM**

★★★★★

As you establish safe houses around the city, more and more missions become available. Some advance the story, but there's an abundance of side quests and doing these is vital to level up your character and acquire better weapons and gear.



[GAME]

Tom Clancy's The Division

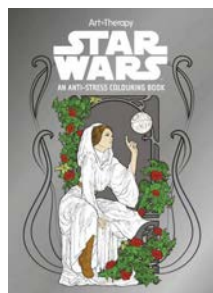
£42 // PS4/XB1/PC

PUBLISHER, UBISOFT

The Division is another co-operative, loot-grinding shooter, only this one is set on the ruined streets of New York following a smallpox epidemic that has caused the city to be evacuated, leaving just a few survivors and most of Manhattan overrun with gangs of violent looters. Into this chaos go The Division, a force of sleeper agents who lead seemingly normal lives in the city until activated. Though The Division has some great elements the character creation is crap. For a game made to be played co-op with other players, without any meaningful characterisation of the player character, there should be the scope to create a truly unique avatar, especially on this console generation. However, all you get is half a dozen or so faces and a similar number of very samey and boring hair styles to mix and match. It's really lazy.

That said, the scope for building up your character is broad. A wide range of skills, perks and abilities are unlocked in various ways. With PvP and a ton of season pass content to look forward to there's no shortage of stuff to do. Whether the rather samey looking environments and po-faced Clancy atmosphere will be able to hold the interest of the majority of players beyond the first few weeks remains to be seen.

☆☆☆☆☆



[BOOK]

Star Wars Art Therapy Colouring Book

£8 // AUTHORS, ART THERAPY
PUBLISHER, EGMONT

You can't be too careful when talking about the modern craze for adult colouring books – and we're Geeky Monkey, how can we complain about the infantilising of society surrounded by all the toys and cosplay ephemera we are? So we'll skip all the reminders of the actually creative, artistic or in any way beneficial things you could be doing instead of scratching crayons over someone else's art, and get right down to it – this book is packed with monochrome line drawings of Star Wars scenes. Enjoy, kids.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

You, Me and the Apocalypse

£15 // STARRING, MATTHEW BAYNTON,
ROB LOWE // STUDIO, UNIVERSAL

Ordinarily we'd kick off about the absence of anything on these discs besides the episodes themselves, but if you're one of the many who let You, Me and the Apocalypse slip by due to it not being on a proper TV channel, we have to recommend that you give it a chance. With a cast iron cast and a rather silly but constantly twisting and turning plot – not terribly funny for a 'comedy drama', but genuinely unpredictable and occasionally shocking – it's a superior march towards armageddon.

☆☆☆☆☆



[BOOK]

Sailor to a Siren

£10 // WRITER, ZOË SUMRA
PUBLISHER, ELSEWHEN PRESS

An intoxicating mix of all-action space opera and gangland thriller, this debut novel from Zoë Sumra is a bit of a triumph. You'll find well-rounded characters, dastardly business plots, magic fantasy with a scientific slant and a superweapon that may be small, but has enough punch to shatter peace throughout the galaxy in these pages. There are plenty of plot twists and cliffhangers to keep you reading. Available in both paperback and on Kindle, we just can't wait to read more from Zoë.

☆☆☆☆☆



[COLLECTABLE] Harry Potter: Quidditch Set

£14 //
PUBLISHER, RUNNING PRESS

This is a beautiful commemorative knick-knack to take up a modest space in your own dormitory – a carefully recreated replica of the kind of wizard sports gear to be found all over the place in Hogwarts, in its own creaky trunk, with lock and key to prevent others from getting their hands on your magic balls.

The Harry Potter Quidditch Set has been lavishly put together by book publishers Running Press, but be warned – although the box comes with a Quaffle, and two Bludgers, the Snitch itself cannot be removed from the trunk, and is just there for show. In fact, it's all just there for show. We're sorry to spoil all the fun, but the best you can do is stand on a football pitch with a broom between your legs shouting "COME ON, GRIFFINDOR!" This replica will not make you a successful Quidditch star – even in the ground-based actual game which has been extrapolated from Rowling's works. It will, however, gather excellent magical dust.

☆☆☆☆

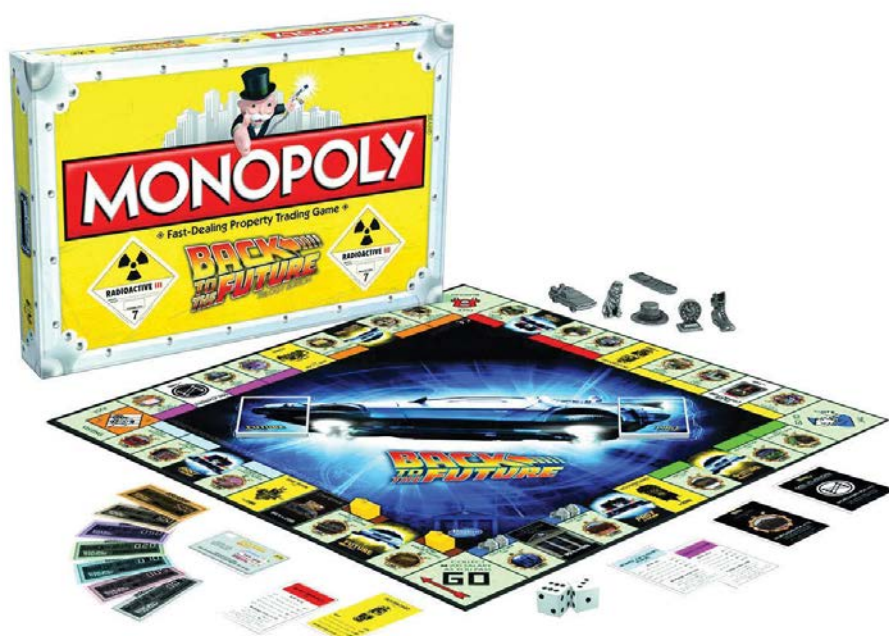


[GAME] Mortal Kombat XL

£40 // PS4/XB1/PC
PUBLISHER, WARNER BROS

Mortal Kombat X got some stick for the price of its season pass, but the quality of the game was never in question. With MK 9, Injustice and MK X, NetherRealm has proved that fighting games can have compelling and narrative-driven story modes. However, it's the fighting mechanics that really matter, and MK X tightened up everything from MK 9, also introducing a more robust online experience. MK XL is MK X with all the additional characters and content from the season pass, and if it came highly recommended before, this puts it over the edge into must-buy territory. Leatherface, Jason Voorhees, the Xenomorph and Predator slip seamlessly into the character roster alongside series veterans and some interesting new original additions. Street Fighter V has been rightly criticized for its shortage of content at launch. By contrast Mortal Kombat XL is as content-rich as you could possibly hope for. An absolute beast of a package.

☆☆☆☆



Great Scott Marty! You can choose to be a tiny DeLorean or clock tower!

[TOY] Back to the Future Monopoly

£30 //
MAKER, WINNING MOVES

We love the brilliant theming that Winning Moves and Hasbro do with their classic games Monopoly, Risk and Cluedo. We're giving away Game of Thrones Monopoly sets this issue, and we've been enjoying mammoth sessions of this excellent Back to the Future version. Okay, so creating a customised version of the game is just a matter of theming the board, cards and money, then casting some new tokens to play with – but if you're a fan of the trilogy you will get a real thrill out of 'owning' Café 80s or landing on the Mr Fusion space. Essential locations from the Back to the Future story, like the McFly residence and Doc Brown's house, appear multiple times on the board in different time zones. Six players can take part at once, with iconic Back to the Future tokens to choose from: The DeLorean, Einstein the dog, a cowboy hat, the clock tower, the 2015 Hover Board and a Nike Power Lace Shoe. The Chance and Community Chest cards have been replaced with Past and Future versions too. This time travelling Monopoly is a must for all geeky sci-fi collectors. We don't think there was any need to warn on the box "Product does not actually send you through time" though!

☆☆☆☆



[BLU-RAY]

Basket Case – The Trilogy

£19 // DIRECTOR, FRANK HENENLOTTER
STUDIO, SECOND SIGHT

1982's tale of Duane and his hideous ex-siamese twin Belial was such a cult hit, at the end of the decade two sequels were rushed into production, creating a low-budget freak-filled trilogy beloved by horror geeks with strong stomachs. This celebratory package is packed with entertaining features, including an all-new documentary, a commentary, and outtakes. It's hard going for the uninitiated, but you can't call yourself a horror aficionado until you've opened the basket and looked inside without puking.

☆☆☆☆☆



[BOOK]

Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice: The Art of the Film

£17 // PUBLISHER, TITAN BOOKS

There's been some great imagery to support the release of Batman V Superman as the two iconic heroes prepare to go head-to-head for the first time on the big screen. This book commemorates this momentous event with storyboards, costumes, concept art, behind the scenes shots, cast and crew interviews and fascinating insight from the man in the director's chair Zack Snyder. A must for anyone looking for a more complete understanding of the movie.

☆☆☆☆☆



[TOY]

Ghostbusters Talking Stay Puft Marshmallow Man 15"

£40 // MAKER, UNDERGROUND TOYS

Talking, you say? But everyone knows that the skyscraper-sized candy icon does a lot of things – stepping on churches, covering Manhattan in white gunk – but he never actually talks. Don't worry, that just means that squeezing the saucy sailor's tummy produces a tinny rendition of Ray Parker Jr's Ghostbusters theme tune. There's a whole plethora of Stay Puft plushes out there, but if your life is empty without one, and the idea of buying one just pops in there, this is the one to plump for.

☆☆☆☆☆



[GAME]

Heavy Rain and Beyond Collection

£30 // PS4
PUBLISHER, SONY

French developer Quantic Dreams is arguably the master of the interactive fable, and no two projects prove this better than this double serving of its PS3 serial killer opus, Heavy Rain, and the ghost-busting yarn, Beyond Two Souls. Both games pushed the machine to the edge of a technical precipice at the time of their release, and now the French developer has dusted off the code and spruced it up for PS4 for anyone who might have missed them first time around.

The result is twofold: the stories remain the same, equal parts silly and yet bizarrely intriguing, as do the controls – which require you to shake the controller or push the analogue stick in a certain direction – while everything from lighting to motion blur and a full 1080p sheen has been added to entice new buyers and anyone keen enough for a second spin. For the asking price, it's a steal, but if it's new gameplay you seek, best to look further afield because you won't find it here.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

Another World

£17 // STARRING, ZACH COHEN // DIRECTOR, EITAN REUVEN // STUDIO, HIGH FLIERS

This is a low budget, post apocalyptic zombie flick rammed with zombie movie clichés. These are the running like hell, frantic type of zombie that modern cinema is so fond of too. None of your shuffling and moaning here. Actually, they look like zombies but in fact these are infected people with a lust for blood. When shot, they die.

The writing is a bit clunky in places, the acting is ropey from time to time, and the god-awful voiceover man just seems to be taking the piss, but actually it's incredibly watchable in a trashy kind of way. Once much of the running around shooting the infected with machine guns has been got out of the movie's system, it evolves into a darker, more thought provoking piece. The uninfected humans stuck together start to question whether they can trust each other to have their backs. Maybe they are better off with the infected who only have one thing on their mind – eating brains!

☆☆☆☆☆



[GAME]

Far Cry Primal

£42 // PS4/XB1/PC
PUBLISHER, UBISOFT

When Far Cry Primal was first announced, we had our doubts about its ability to maintain the core essence of what a Far Cry title is about, especially when the developers had opted to take a 12,000 year trip back in time and eschew the series' blistering firefights in favour of spears and clubs. Thankfully those reservations were allayed within just a few hours of exploring Ubisoft Montreal's gorgeously crafted prehistoric opus.

While guns may be gone, the low-tech reboot of sort features a raft of teeth-rattling scuffles with cannibal cavemen and beasts itching to take a bite out of you that more than make up for the lack of modern day firepower. If anything, the primitive gameplay twist has added an air of freshness to Far Cry, thanks to stellar character design and a bespoke language delivered entirely through subtitles.

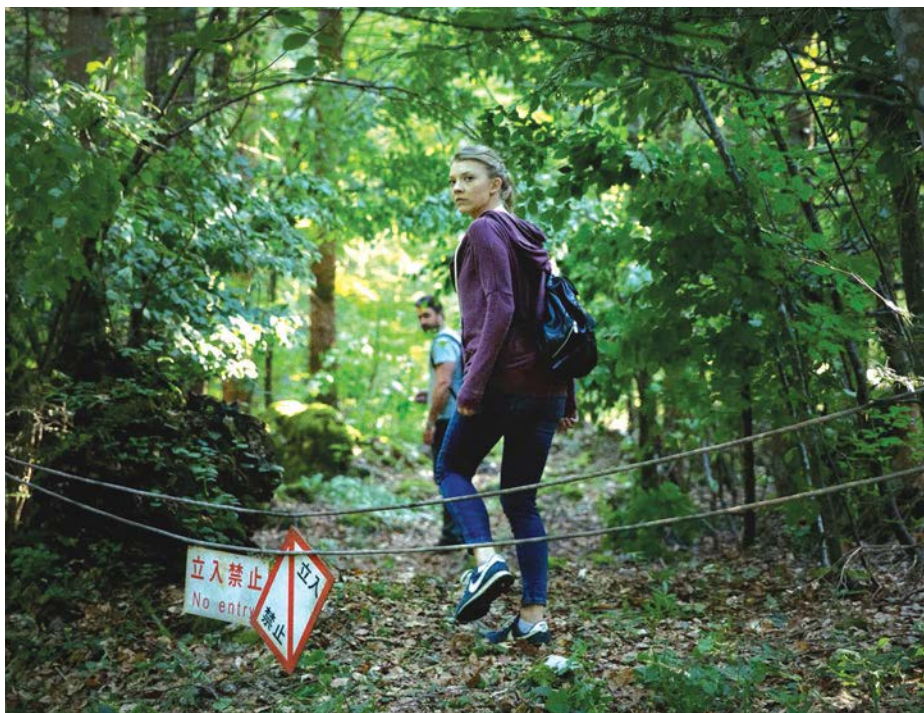
Ironically, the primeval setting and overall design is felled only by a shamefully rudimentary narrative that feels like it could have been etched out on the back of a rock by Primal's cavemen cast of characters. You play as Takkar, a member of the Wenja tribe, your goal to work alongside a mishmash of allies in order to gain a stranglehold over the hostile world of Oros. And that's about it. Yes there are a few supernatural twists and turns in keeping with elements established in the previous two Far Cry games, but that's about as deep it gets on the narrative frontlines. And while there are villains lurking about in the storyline, none of them are as notable as the superbly written Vaas or the equally merciless, Pagan Min.

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE BARRELLING ACROSS THE TERRAIN ON A BLOODFANG SABRETOOTH

Such are the shortcomings of the story and the supporting characters that populate this world, you'll most likely find yourself kicking the main campaign to the kerb in favour of taking down enemy outposts and scavenging the lands for resources to bolster your vast array of upgradeable gear, including a trusty bow and arrow, club, spear and other decidedly nasty killing tools. One of the most intriguing new additions to the Far Cry formula is the ability to tame the beasts of Oros, and truthfully, there's nothing quite like barrelling across the terrain on a Bloodfang Sabretooth, so subdue one the moment the opportunity presents itself.

It would be extremely easy to knock Far Cry Primal for its back-peddling approach to a winning formula, but despite some narrative inadequacies and a so-so cast of characters, Ubisoft Montreal's journey to the past has laid the groundwork for some fascinating ideas for the series' future iterations.

☆☆☆☆



Inspired by a Wikipedia article on the actual suicide spot in Japan, Aokigahara, you have to ask whether *The Forest* is even appropriate as a movie?

[FILM]

The Forest

DIRECTOR, JASON ZADA // STARRING, NATALIE DORMER
STUDIO, ICON

The *Forest* sees Natalie Dormer take on the dual roles of twin sisters Sara and Jess. Jess is an English teacher in Japan who disappeared in Aokigahara, a real-life Japanese location infamous for suicides. Sara, suffering from her own trauma, senses that Jess may still be alive so naturally she ventures out into the macabre location to track her sibling down.

Intriguing, right? Not quite. The film is riddled with missed opportunities. Where to start? The entire opening act is squandered on meandering scenes that do little to drive the story, but rather show off the Japanese setting. But once she steps foot inside the forest the setting is practically side-lined and the script becomes laden down with a myriad of familiar scares that could be at home in any other film of this ilk.

Opportunities to explore Japanese horror mythology and culture are utterly squandered, and its handling of the forest in Aokigahara is more than a little tasteless. Here it's an entity that can drive people insane and force them to suicide. It's safe to say the writers should have been a little more sensitive in their appropriation of such a location for their filmmaking needs. Okay, it's nice to look at, but the exploration of psychosis and spooky things feels way too familiar for our liking. Dodge it.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

Dragon Blade

£8 // STARRING, JACKIE CHAN, JOHN CUSACK
STUDIO, SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT

Now here's an oddity which has by-passed both us and indeed most of the Western world – it's a totally Chinese production starring Jackie Chan, which also stars John Cusack and Adrien Brody as warring Roman brothers whose politicking results in numerous epic battles along the Silk Road, back in the first century AD. It was a hit in its native country, but has done nothing here for any but the most obsessive fans of cinematic military action, and the performances are 100% wooden.

☆☆☆☆☆



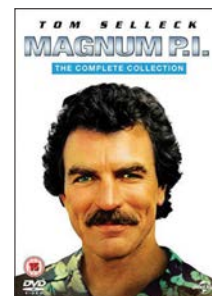
[TOY]

Top Trumps – Adventure Time

£4 //
MAKER, WINNING MOVES

Pen Ward's generation-defining animation classic *Adventure Time* gets the Top Trumps treatment. Although slightly out of date by now character-wise (there's no Root Beer Guy!), all the most beloved characters are in this pack with their numerous virtues rated – wiliness, bravery, and part animal nature, to name but three! At such a cheap price, you couldn't hope for a more charming form of Top Trumps to while away a long journey or slow boxset.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

Magnum P.I.: The Complete Collection

£100 // STARRING, TOM SELLECK
STUDIO, UNIVERSAL

Ah, the greatest moustache of the 1980s finally gets the full DVD treatment for Region 2, containing every single episode from 1980–1988 of the mercurial Hawaiian crime-fighter's adventures, Tom Selleck's finest hour. *Magnum* was a key part of many geeky childhood Saturday afternoons, and in fact sometimes we even actually bothered to watch it – but let's be honest, as an Americanised remake of *Bergerac*, it never quite matched the original. To spend £100 on it would be the worst crime of all.

☆☆☆☆☆

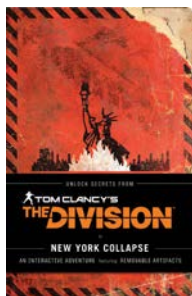


[TOY]
Batman: Arkham Knight – Life-Size Foam Replica

\$1099 (£722) //
MAKER, NECA

Sometimes Geekdom stretches the boundaries of what can be classed a 'toy'. But for anyone with enormous sums of money and a wish to find geeky ways to protect their homes, why not splash the best part of a grand on this? Modelled on the Arkham Knight Batman, this life-size figure was modelled directly on the digital info from the games, and is hand-painted, so probably not suited to too much rough and tumble. Super-villains be warned – this is not a giant stress toy. It's a glorious white elephant.

☆☆☆☆☆



[BOOK]
Tom Clancy's The Division: New York Collapse

£11 // AUTHOR, ALEX IRVINE
PUBLISHER, UBISOFT

To accompany the release of The Division, Ubisoft has published New York Collapse, but this is no simple tie-in novel. There's a story, handwritten in the borders, of a woman trying to unravel the mystery of how New York fell into chaos, while the printed text is a post-apocalyptic survival guide that could easily be applicable if such a scenario ever arises for real. This is a great accompaniment to the game and a really neat standalone book to boot.

☆☆☆☆☆



[COLLECTABLE]
Sherlock Moriarty 1:6 Scale Collector Figure

£190 //
MAKER, BIG CHIEF STUDIOS

It's a limited edition miniature Moriarty in all his greasy-Andrew-Scott glory, replete with a miniature tailored suit, poisoned apple, phone, pistol, cup of tea... and that singularly aggravating inclusion, eight differently posed interchangeable hands. The whole thing sounds too mad to be borne, but then – check the price. There are only 400 of these twisted little geni in the world, with no guarantee that further lines will come down to Sherlock's sensible price, a tenth the cost.

☆☆☆☆☆



[AUDIO BOOK]
Doctor Who: The Paradox Planet

£11 // STARRING, TOM BAKER // DIRECTOR, NICHOLAS BRIGGS
STUDIO, BIG FINISH PRODUCTIONS

Of all The Doctor's numerous multimedia parallel universes away from the small screen, the Big Finish audio adventures are by far the most convincingly canonical – and never moreso since Lord Tom Baker returned to aurally don the sacred scarf once again. Here he's back into the exact same groove four decades later, with Lalla Ward sounding only marginally matronly by his side as Romana and John Leeson's trusty K-9 completing the set. It's the winning team, which is a good job as there are no big guest stars present for Jonathan Morris' own clever temporal-meddling intergalactic story. The plot concerns a warring alien society whose enemies are their own race, far in the distant past – or is it future?

There's no doubting the value of fresh episodes with Tom in charge, so just be glad this recording exists and he's been lured back to the role at all – the CD also contains some fresh interviews with the cast and a teaser for the second part of the story – Legacy of Death, out very soon. Maybe not soon enough for some, but every effort has been made to make The Paradox Planet seem like teatime in the 1970s with your eyes closed, and what is a Tom Baker story without a tantalising cliffhanger...?

☆☆☆☆☆



[GAME]

The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess HD

£40 // WiiU
PUBLISHER, NINTENDO

With the nineteenth Legend of Zelda game due for launch later this year, I guess Nintendo thought it was now or never to get a HD remake of Twilight Princess into the shops (or Twilight Princess as a Nintendo magazine once mistakenly called it on their cover). The trouble with converting a game that is now ten years old to WiiU is that you're never going to be able to gloss over what is GameCube-era graphics, levels and design.

Right from the opening scenes where Link rides his horse Epona through the landscape you can see the angular hillsides and cliffs that old-school 3D games used to boast about. Only, this is 2016 and a console that is capable of so much more. Back in the day the Wii conversion was criticised for its blurry textures and tacked on Wii remote controls, so there was a lot of work to do to bring this adventure up to modern standards.

Okay, so everything is now in HD, with additional time and effort put into upgrading textures, so there's some extra polish to enjoy, but just wait and see what Nintendo does with the new, dedicated WiiU Zelda and you'll see why asking £40 for this is a bit of a cheek.

Of course, what you have here is a game that scored highly across the board ten years ago – so at its core it's a fantastic chapter of the Zelda adventure. The story, art style and cut scenes still hold up. Exploring castles in the mist, meeting enchanting characters and solving puzzles is as much fun as ever, although we would have preferred there to be less loading going on as Link enters and exits areas.

Yes, the story is captivating, but again, you really do miss the flow of a well voice acted game – Link and the cast never say a word, instead all the speech rattles up on the screen for you to read though – again and again if you talk to the same people multiple times.

JUST WAIT AND SEE WHAT NINTENDO DOES WITH THE NEW, DEDICATED WIIU ZELDA

Twilight Princess is, and always was, very slow to get started, with lots of toing and froing around the Ordon Village while you get used to the WiiU gamepad controls, learn to ride Epona and do a spot of fishing, but once you get through this and actually start dungeon exploring, things do hot up. A great twist for those who have never played the game before is that Link gets to transform into Wolf Link, use his senses to sniff out clues, talk to animals and search the twilight of locations to discover secrets. Collectors better check their Paypal accounts are topped up – there's a range of Zelda Amiibo figures that each have an effect on elements of the game, including a Wolf Link figure in a special edition that opens up a bonus challenge in The Cave of Shadows.

Twilight Princess HD is obviously a stop gap game, but still an essential play. It's just a shame it wasn't cheaper.

☆☆☆☆



Streaming for you
on Netflix right now
– new episodes of
Daredevil.

[TV]

Daredevil, Season 2

STARRING, CHARLIE COX, DEBORAH ANN WOLL //
CHANNEL, NETFLIX

We know you want to know about The Punisher in Marvel's Daredevil. While we can't get into any major details due to the fact we were NDA'd to the hilt when sitting down to watch the first seven episodes of season two, we can tell you Jon Bernthal was born to play Frank Castle.

In fact, he nails the character's murderous nature better than any actor before him, delivering both a standout performance in a series chock full of stellar actors, whilst stealing scenes right out from under Charlie Cox's nose. And let's not forget Elodie Yung's Elektra, who delivers a performance oozing with magnetism. To be honest, if it weren't for the introduction of both characters early on, things would feel a little flat because, like all second seasons, Daredevil takes a little while to find its footing.

Still, Cox has settled into the role perfectly and has gotten noticeably better at bustin' heads since we last saw him wield the batons. Case in point: a fight scene clearly crafted to top the hallway sequence from the first season serves as one of the highlights of the small serving of episodes Geeky Monkey was privy to. If what we've seen so far is any indication of what's in store, it would appear that Marvel and Netflix have yet again raised the bar for small screen entertainment.

☆☆☆☆☆



[DVD]

Adventure Time – Season 3

£20 // EPISODES, 26
STUDIO, WARNER HOME VIDEO

Thanks to Adventure Time not being properly supported by any UK TV network, the show has always had a certain ad-hoc feel to it. Having the seasons collected together as they were intended to be enjoyed, this feels far more substantial – each Adventure Time series boxset is something to be treasured. They do, however, take a while to come round, and by now, this five-year-old season feels like classic gold from times of yore – not that the show is flagging now, but when you consider that season three introduced Fionna & Cake, Flame Princess and the Earl of Lemongrab for the first time, you can see that this is gold standard.

The DVD features commentaries on every single episode, plus a featurette on how original ideas turn into animations, a totally staggering fan-made LEGO version of the opening credits, and generally would be cheap at twice the price. This is a ticket to 'the craziest party ever!' – 100% Mathematical.

☆☆☆☆☆



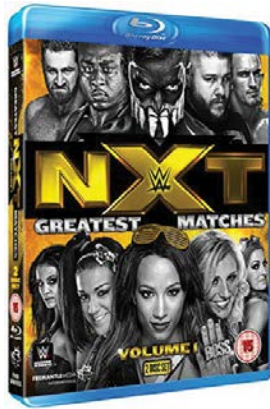
[DVD]

Doom Watch: Series 1-3

£30 // STARRING, SIMON OATES, ROBERT POWELL
STUDIO, SIMPLY MEDIA

Outside of gigantic ecological disaster movies, there's not a lot of room for apocalyptic pessimism on TV these days, but back in the 1970s, that Cold War era of chilling Public Information Films, there was Doomwatch. Having given non-literal birth to the Cybermen in his time as Doctor Who story editor, in 1970 co-creator Gerry Davis collaborated with the show's science adviser Kit Pedler to present the 'Department for the Observation and Measurement of Scientific Work' department – an X-Files-style government bureau to investigate extraordinary threats to mankind. With everything from much-needed ecological warning to mutated sewer rats, three series of 38 episodes were broadcast by the BBC until 1972, when a spin-off movie capped the programme. Sadly, 14 of the episodes remain 'missing believed wiped', hence their perfectly reasonable absence from this boxset. But this remnant of a terrified era is well worth a fresh viewing.

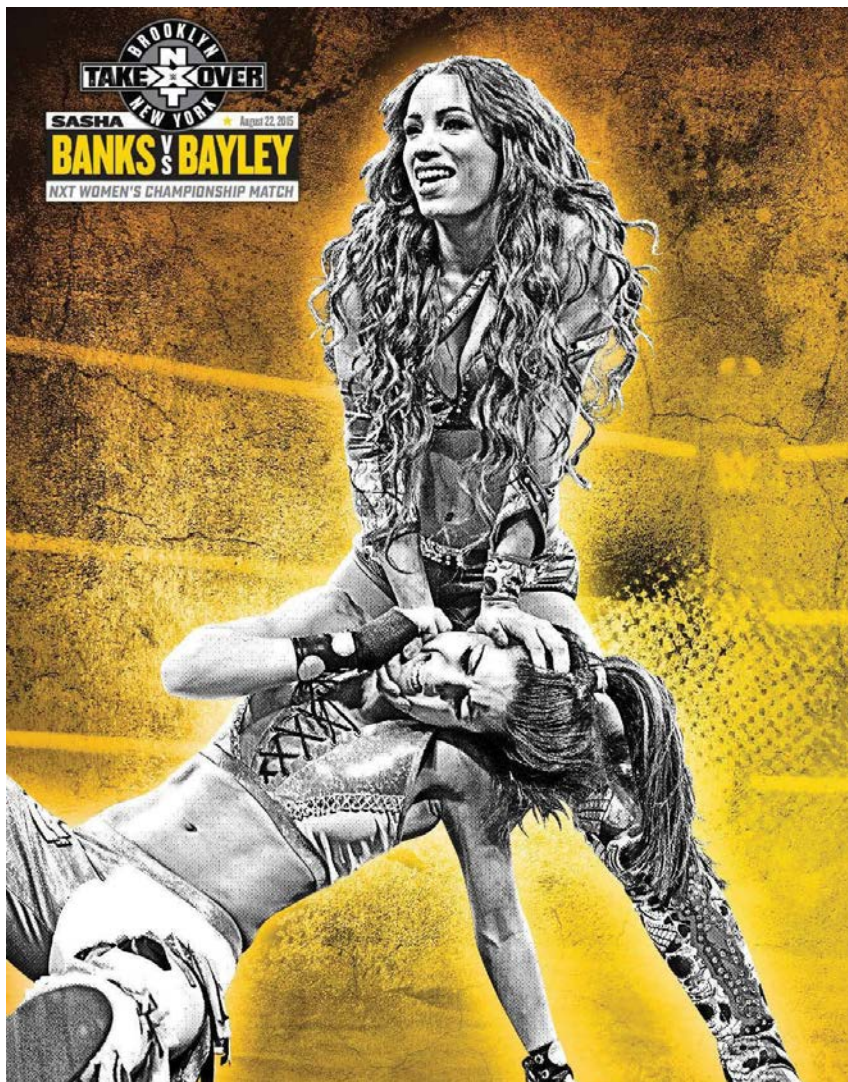
☆☆☆☆☆



[BLU-RAY]

WWE: NXT Greatest Matches Vol.1

£24 // STUDIO, FREMANTLE HOME ENTERTAINMENT



JADED WWE FANS HAVE FOUND THAT NXT'S HOUR-LONG WEDNESDAY NIGHT SHOW HAS BECOME THE MOST SATISFYING, EASILY DIGESTIBLE PIECE OF WEEKLY TV

Arguably the biggest revelation in the wrestling world over the past two years has been the growth of WWE's developmental brand, NXT. Based in Florida, the proverbial 'third brand' has proven to be anything but an ugly step-child. Instead, jaded WWE fans have found that NXT's hour-long Wednesday night show has become the most satisfying, easily digestible piece of weekly TV the promotion offers. Additionally, their regular Takeover specials that air on the WWE Network, have proven to be events that have outclassed the majority of regular WWE pay-per-views.

It's no surprise then, that the standard of grappling featured on NXT's Greatest Matches is very high indeed. Sami Zayn outings are always to be admired, and here he's represented by excellent bouts with Neville, Cesaro and Kevin Owens. The 21/8/13 Cesaro match in particular, is an outstanding example of modern day wrestling of the highest standard.

Irishman Finn Balor has a cracking title match with Kevin Owens, originally broadcast live from Japan, in the Beast in the East Special. Other matches, such as a WrestleMania weekend Hideo Itami appearance, and a tag match reuniting Indy icons Cesaro and Kassius Ohno (Chris Hero), are compelling oddities that many onlookers will not have seen before in any form.

Generally speaking, it would be difficult not to be impressed by an array of talent that also includes Seth Rollins, CM Punk, Bray Wyatt, Chris Jericho, Bray Wyatt, and Samoa Joe. This first volume presents a solid range of names, but also does a fine job of presenting context and a little bit of story to compliment the action.

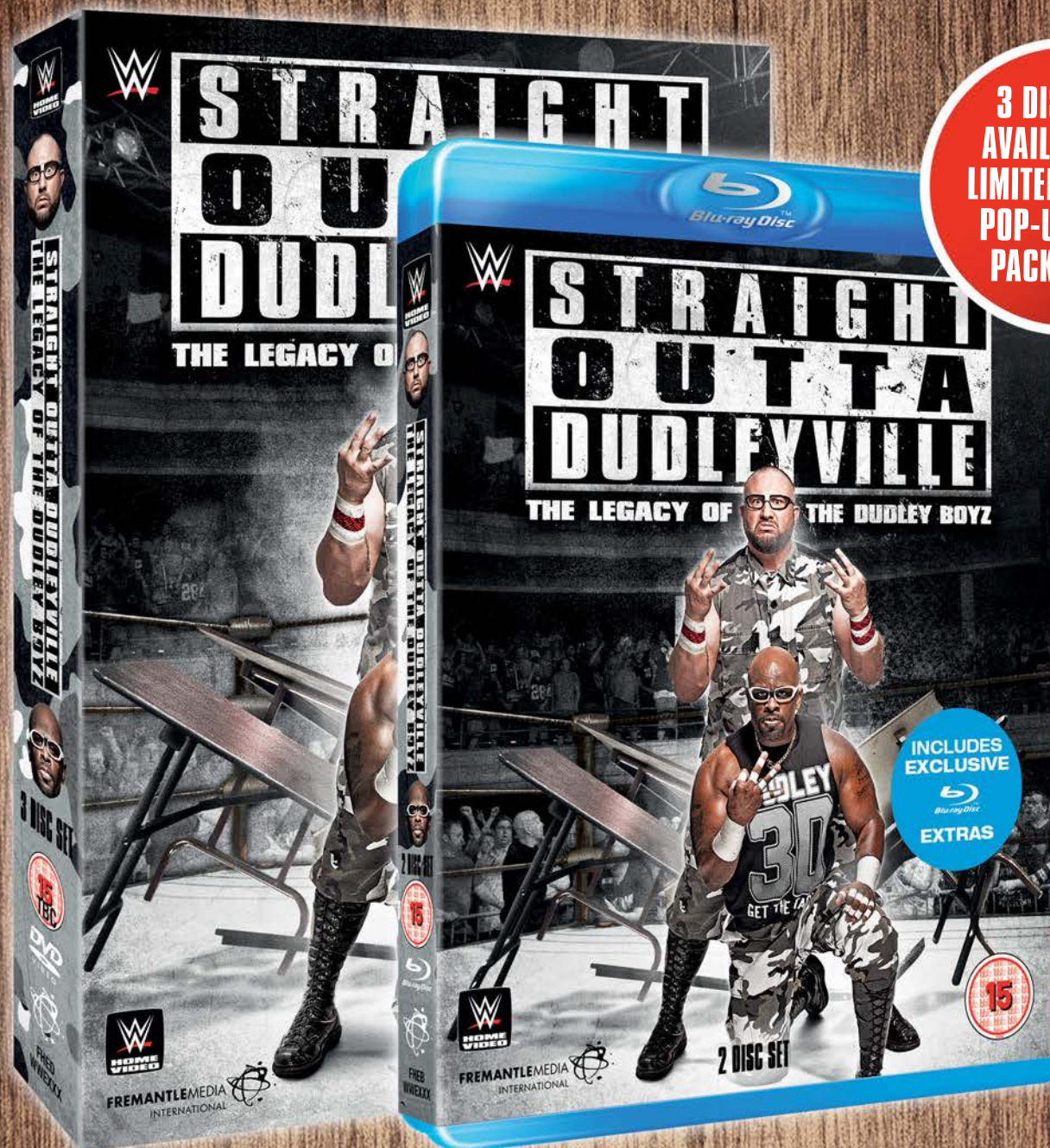
Worth noting too – one of the biggest achievements that NXT's guiding forces Triple H, Sara D'Amato and Matt Bloom have accomplished is in their progressive presentation of the women's division. The fruits of their labour are dissected throughout, even if we'd like a little more detail, but this is a fair intro. The resulting contests though, are great stuff. Formative divisional title matches Paige versus Emma and Charlotte against Natalya are compelling, but it's the Sasha Banks material that really shines. Two more recent women's title matches (from events last February and August), are absolutely exhilarating.

Those who don't follow WWE particularly closely may not recognise some of the names on NXT's marquee, but to pass up on the admission fee would be a calamitous error. This is a compilation featuring numerous bouts of the highest possible standard, and faces that have slowly beginning to dominate the wrestling landscape.

★★★★★



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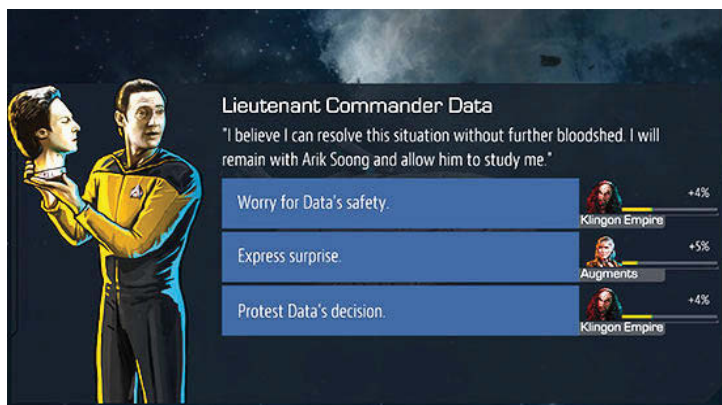


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Star Trek Timelines

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE
DEVELOPER, DISRUPTOR BEAM

As Jean-Luc Picard once explained, money won't exist in the 24th Century as the acquisition of wealth will no longer be the driving force of our lives, and so we'll work purely to better ourselves and the rest of humanity. It'll be delightful, but now back to the capitalistic present where it very much does exist and definitely is the driving force behind this otherwise enjoyable free-to-play Panini sticker album of a Star Trek strategic RPG, that prices an entire shipment of dillithium crystals at a hearty £79.99!

Featuring the warm snarky tones of John De Lancie as Q (who narrates) and short sound samples of characters from the original series, TNG, DS9, Voyager and Enterprise, Timelines certainly has a (potentially) full deck of near everything Trek, and so provides a great deal of fan service to enjoy. It's armed with suitably cinematic ship-to-ship battles. It has missions in which you can send a team comprised of the likes of Kathryn Janeway, Hikaru Sulu and Worf of the House of Martok down to a Ceti Alpha VI to rescue civilians from imminent disaster, engage in diplomatic relations, and fight invaders. If you're a Trekker you will travel to planets you will know, encounter recognisable characters, equip equipment you will be familiar with, and maybe even raise a wry smile at a story that explains such odd team-ups by featuring an anomaly that's not only melding time, but also alternate timelines together to ultimately bring about the destruction of the universe.

Unfortunately, you will be boldly grinding where other free-to-play games have grinded before as you won't journey far without levelling-up your ship and crew, and to do that without dedicating a fiendish amount of your life means spending real money on dillithium to then use to buy what amounts to sets of random cards.

It's pretty light too. Combat is mostly a matter of watching as phasers are fired and photon torpedoes launched automatically, and waiting for a character to recharge their ability so their icon can be tapped to perform an action. Need them to work faster and harder? You'll need to either upgrade them, or swap them with someone more effective and harder to find without spending money. Away missions offer more depth as you'll first build your team before using each of their

YOU WILL BE BOLDLY GRINDING WHERE OTHER FREE-TO-PLAY GAMES HAVE GRINDED BEFORE

strengths to trump their way down a small map of pathways intersected by situations. Need a micro-forcefield to be developed? You'll need a scientist and so someone like Jadzia Dax. Faced with a green-skinned Orion slave girl in need of understanding that thing humans call love? James T Kirk is your man, or would be if the game had a sense of humour.

As there are always various routes to take you can often play to your team's strengths, but since you won't know the exact strength of the situations you're going to encounter you can still find that you've got a duff hand if it's not well balanced, and to make it so you'll be tempted to spend cash. Indeed, without extra investment Timelines lacks balance in general, and although it can often be deeply ingratiating it can also feel like it was created by marketers and behavioural psychologists more than actual game developers.

☆☆☆☆

Superhot

STEAM £17.99 //
DEVELOPER, SUPERHOT TEAM



In real-time, it's over in seconds. You've punched a man in the gut, caught his gun as he falls back, pulled the trigger and exploded his face, then sidestepped as his distant partner's bullets fizz past your neck. You've shot him too, then found that your clip is empty and so have thrown the useless metal at another nearby goon, but now one armed with a samurai sword. Stunning them temporarily, you've snatched their blade and used it to relieve them their head before leaping over a speeding car, then cutting your last remaining enemy in half. The thing is, Superhot doesn't actually play in real-time. Time only moves when you do, and so each short, imaginative, and excruciatingly violent episode takes place in beautifully luxurious slow-motion, the result is a stylised first person shooter that plays like a puzzler that makes you feel like you're Mr Anderson from The Matrix.

Genuinely, this is the most exciting, compelling and original title we've seen in years and its core mechanic is so blissfully fulfilling that once you've tasted your first stretched-out battle you'll be sucked in until you've completed them all, multiple times. Then you'll force a friend to do the same.

★★★★★



No health bars,
no ammo drops
- just you and
your wits in
slow motion.

The Walking Dead: Michonne

STEAM £10.99 // iOS £3.99 // ANDROID £4.27
DEVELOPER, TELLTALE GAMES



Ever considered that when the undead refuse to die you'd quite like to be someone relentlessly tough like The Walking Dead's killing machine Michonne? Then this three part mini-series driven by TellTale's standard interactive story style and set between her absence from issues 126 and 129 of the comics might well make you think again.

While she may seem emotionlessly pragmatic and so perfectly suited to carving her way through a world gone to hell, you don't have to delve deep into her psyche to see her inner pain. In fact, you only have to play the opening section of Episode One: In Too Deep to know it intimately and feel directly how she's haunted by the deaths of her daughters.

Elegantly constructed, thoughtfully written, and functioning as more of a psychological horror than its predecessors, this series is off to a phenomenal start even if it does rely on many of the same old motifs. As usual there are choices to make and people to trust or be wary and locations to search, but now with tighter quick-time battles and above all a robust character to get to know on a whole new level.

★★★★★



For the price you get access to
all three episodes of Michonne,
the first available now.

Rogue Agent

iOS £2.29 // ANDROID £2.47
DEVELOPER, ROGUEBOX STUDIOS



According to videogames, MI6 would be better off scouting the International Hide and Seek Championships for recruits rather than wasting their time flirting with Oxbridge undergraduates, as Rogue Agent is only too happy to attest. Think of it as being a bit like Metal Gear Simple, but with the occasional re-wiring or lock-picking conundrum to deal with, and guards that relentlessly follow their patrol paths while moaning about how bored they are with their jobs. It's certainly got a lot of charm and its short but quite sweet levels really do suit those periods when you've only time for a quick dabble. No necks are broken, no endless exposition given, no women are objectified, but you will be largely fulfilled.

☆☆☆☆☆



Marvel Avengers Academy

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE
DEVELOPER, COFFEE STAIN STUDIOS



Interested in a 'free' teen Avengers base-building game? How about if it's going to cost you two hours or 16 Infinity Gem Shards just to stop Loki from dancing by himself at a disco? Competitively, waiting just a few minutes or spending two Gems to stop Wasp from taking selfies is a bargain, but nevertheless, what we have here, right from the start, could only be more reprehensible if it was hosted by Nick Grimshaw. Also featuring Tony Stark (as played by Ben 10) and a host of other loathsomely youthful incarnations of favourite superheroes, this cynical cash cow is totally unplayable unless you either buy Gems or play for a handful of seconds, do something else for an age, and return to repeat a pointless loop.

☆☆☆☆☆



The Swords

iOS £2.29 //
DEVELOPER, LEE-KUO CHEN



This elegantly abstract telling of the story of the life of an ancient Chinese swordsman might appear like a game about swiping your finger on a screen to leave brushed lines of ink, but it's so much more than that. It's more than a mature take on Fruit Ninja too, although comparisons are as obvious as they are unfortunate. No, The Swords truly is something that feels fresh even though its mechanics feel familiar. Thanks to a combination of its narrative, art style, and dash of Zen it can be totally captivating. So much so that you'll often feel like you've been in a fight, and are suitably and blissfully exhausted. Other similar games feel like a distraction, The Swords feels like a lesson.

☆☆☆☆☆





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MEGA MACHINE

AT-AT

WHAT'S THAT COMING OVER THE HILL?
IS IT A MONSTER?

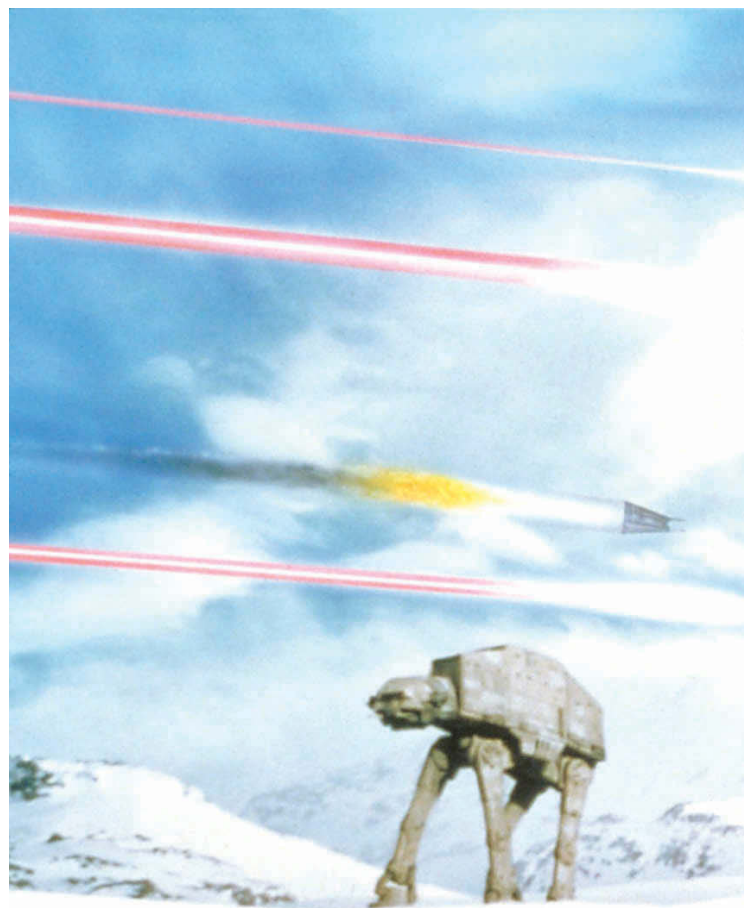
Previously on these pages we've tended to focus on slightly less well known vehicles from various comics, cartoons, videogames and movies, but the more we thought about it, the more we thought we just had to feature the AT-AT, or All Terrain Armoured Transport to give it its full name, as if you didn't know. There are loads of amazing vehicles to choose from in the Star Wars universe. We could have gone Star Destroyer, Millennium Falcon or even the Death Star, but there's just something intrinsically unique about the AT-AT. The three Walkers emerging from the blizzard during the attack on Echo Base at the start of Empire is one of the great 'Oh shit!' moments in cinema, and we'll always love them for that.

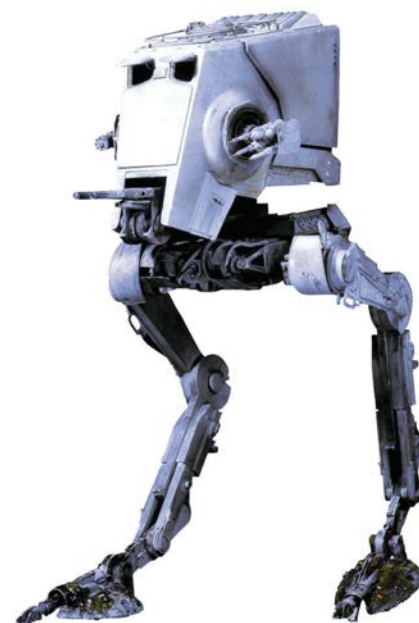
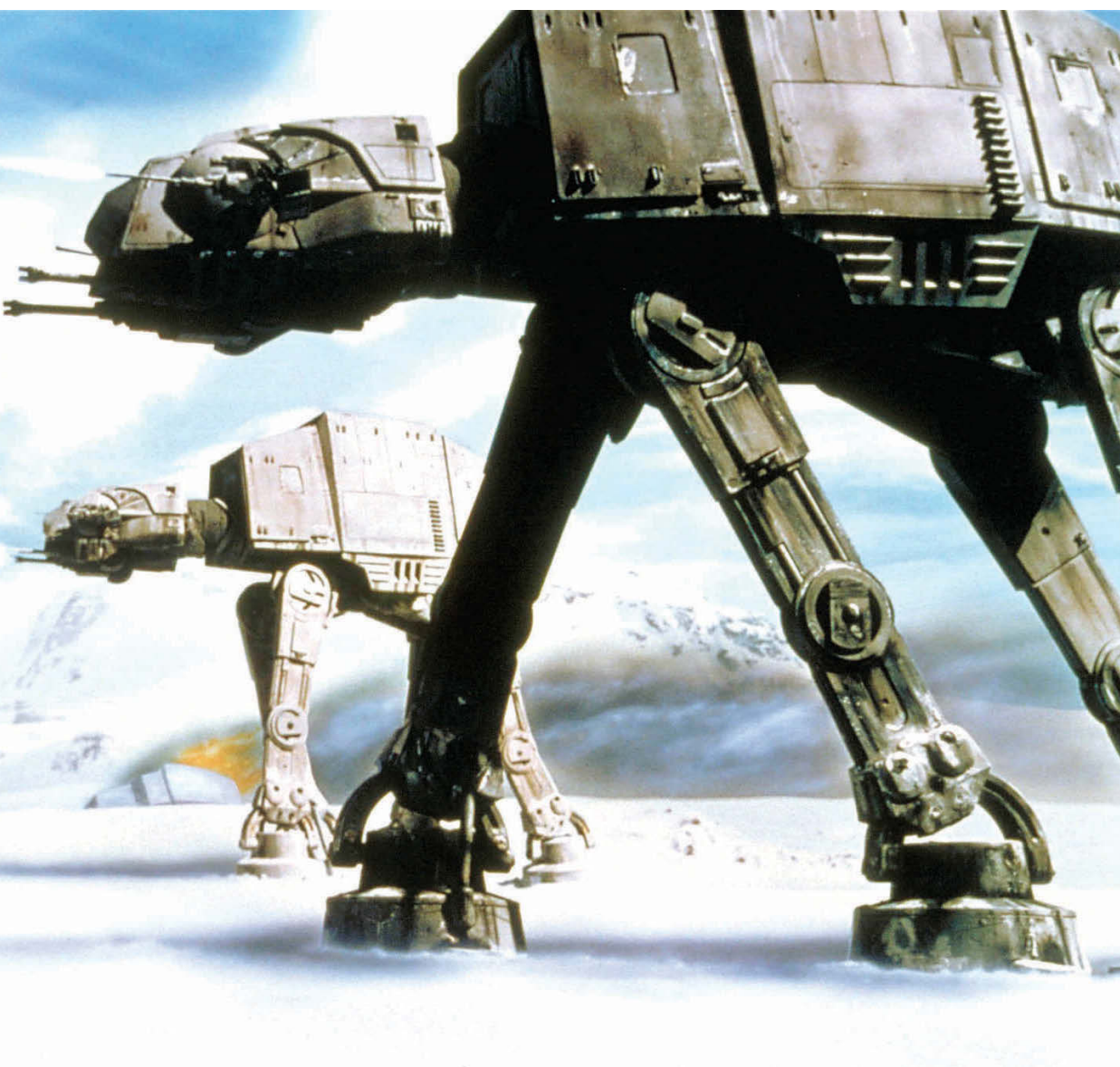
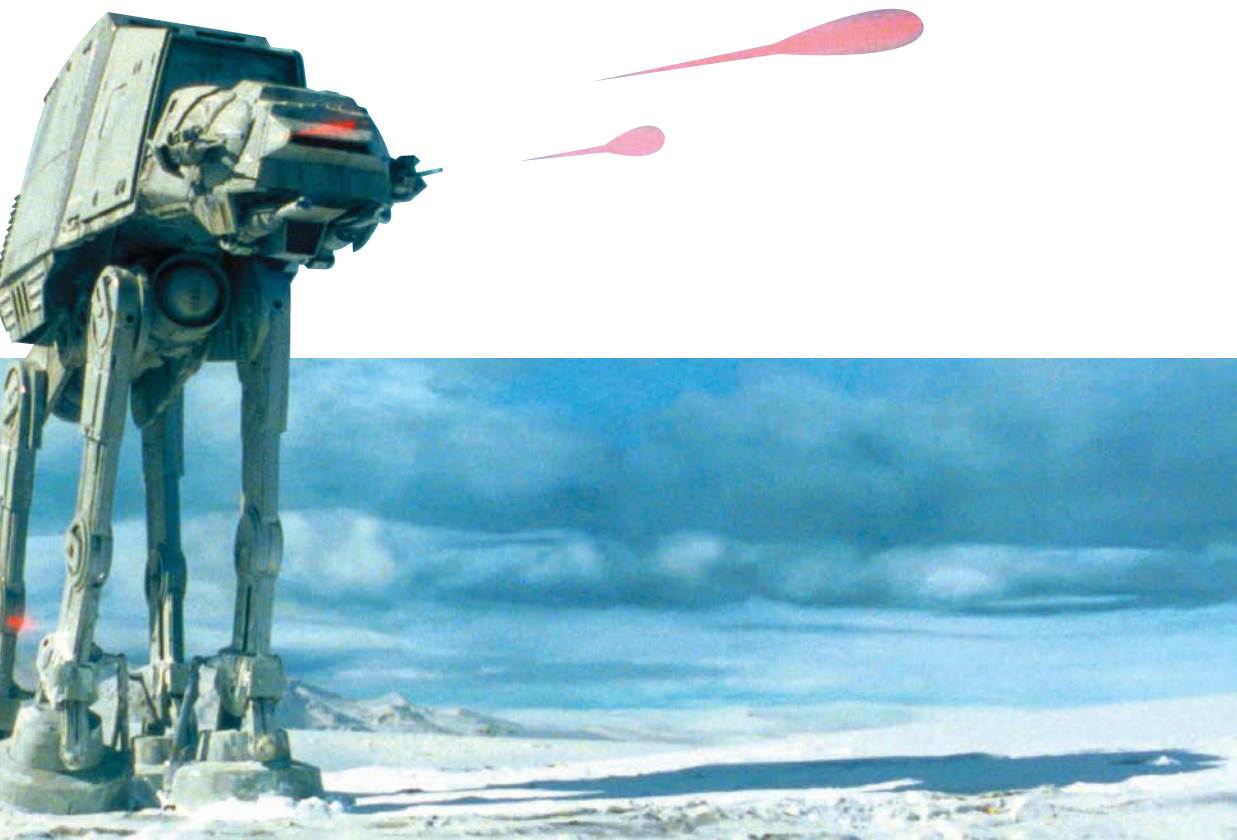
It's generally accepted that AT-ATs stand over 20 metres in height, although if you delve deep enough into expanded universe material you'll find various heights quoted from 15 to 22.5 metres. What isn't up for debate is the AT-AT's formidable armament and armour. Its superstructure is virtually impervious to blaster fire although the 'neck' is considered to be a particularly vulnerable point. Two cheek-mounted blasters provide all round defence while twin forward-firing laser cannons under the chin represent the AT-AT's main offensive capability. Two drivers and a commander occupy the cockpit while it has room in the rear for up to 40 troops and five speeder bikes. This makes it an assault vehicle, mobile artillery unit and troop transport all rolled into one. Which is handy.

Despite all that, you have to question the practicality of the design. A machine that walks on legs is a vastly more complex prospect than a traditional wheeled vehicle. Indeed an early concept design for the AT-AT, produced by special effects artist Joe Johnston, envisaged a large, multi-wheeled off-road-type vehicle. However, that original design of Johnston's didn't go to waste and actually ended up becoming the Clone Turbo Tank as seen in *Revenge of the Sith*. The consensus is that the design of the AT-AT is one of 'fear over function'. In other words, the Empire's engineers could have come up with a troop transport and mobile artillery unit that was simpler in design and more practical in application, but the AT-AT's unwieldy aspect (Han Solo is known to have described it as handling 'like a drunken bantha') was considered a fair trade off against the awe and fear it would strike into the hearts of the enemy.

Industrial Light and Magic actually studied the movement of elephants to ensure the AT-AT's movements looked convincing and made sense, and go-motion was used for the animation in *Empire*. The AT-AT itself is a more advanced derivation of the more squat AT-TE (All Terrain Tactical Enforcer) which was in service during the Clone Wars. It's featured extensively in the Clone Wars TV series and can also be seen in *Revenge of the Sith*.

The term AT-AT is never used at any point during any of the movies. The AT-ATs and AT-STs are simply referred to as Imperial Walkers, but every fan knows what they are. Arguably the most awe-inspiring land vehicle ever committed to celluloid, and anyone who tells you they wouldn't kill for the chance to drive one down their local high street is darn liar! **GM**





NOBODY CALLS ME CHICKEN

The slow, lumbering AT-ATs are normally supported by smaller, more manoeuvrable AT-STs (All Terrain Scout Transport), more commonly known as Scout Walkers as AT-ST doesn't work as an acronym. Scout Walkers made their first appearance alongside the AT-ATs in the assault on Echo Base in Empire, but they feature much more prominently in the Battle of Endor in Jedi. They're surprisingly nippy and a fearsome adversary against ground troops, formidably armed with chin-mounted laser cannons and cheek cannons. However, being comprehensively taken out by a few ewoks and a couple of swinging logs has to go down as a low point for at least one AT-ST crew. As the name suggests, the AT-ST's primary role as that of a recon vehicle but in the movies we only actually see it in defensive and supports roles. The AT-ST is sometimes affectionately referred to as a Chicken Walker in reference to its design and the way it moves.



BECAUSE JAPAN

Words: JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan is the author of *Anime: A History* and *Modern Japan: All That Matters*



Right Hand Man

A MANGA CLASSIC FINALLY GETS A MOVIE ADAPTATION

The Earth is under attack. Alien parasites have wormed their way into the brains of uncountable human beings, everybody from policemen to school teachers to noodle sellers. Teenage loser Shinichi (Shota Sometani) knows this because of a fatal flaw in the alien scheme – they can't crawl in through your ears if you're wearing headphones. Instead, his attacker Migi (Sadao Abe) misses Shinichi's brain at the fateful moment and takes over his right hand, bonding them together for life.

Shinichi now has a wise-cracking alien attached to his arm, curious about world affairs, human relationships, and genitals. But he also has an ally in the war with the aliens, since Migi's botched takeover turns him into a pro-human fifth columnist. Shinichi must somehow find out the aliens' plans, without alerting the suspicions of his school teacher Miss Tamiya (Eri Fukatsu), whose blank-faced stare is sure-fire evidence that she has already had her brain eaten.

Japan's first riff on *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* came in the form of the as-yet untranslated *Beautiful Star* by the infamously loopy novelist Yukio Mishima, in which a group of fanatical nerds became convinced that they are Venusian agents tasked with starting a nuclear war. The same period, the 1960s, also saw the granddaddy of all tales of alien symbiosis, when the dying alien Ultraman fused himself inextricably with a passing human, kicking off an ongoing franchise of transforming heroes fighting rubber monsters. By the 1970s, Japanese children's telly was awash with the likes of *School in Peril*, in which teenage angst found new outlets in missions to defy scheming adults who turned out to be alien stooges.

In 1988 when the manga artist Hitoshi Iwaaki published the first chapter of *Kiseijū* (*Parasyte* – the misspelling is a deliberate imitation of a similar twist in the original Japanese), his story was a knowing homage to such childhood chillers. But running in *Afternoon*, a comic magazine for adults, *Parasyte* injected heavy doses of body-horror and paranoia. In gleeful, blood-spattered imitation of John Carpenter's *The Thing*, Iwaaki's aliens let rip with visceral, fanged transformations, like weaponised



Salvador Dali paintings duking it out for control of the Earth. But it was also witty. Migi's oddball friendship with Shinichi was genuinely charming, and their encounters with the humourless alien invaders inevitably creepy or inadvertently funny.

The original Parasyte manga finished in 1995, fading from public view for the oddest of reasons. For several years, the remake rights were purportedly in the hands of James Cameron. The Titanic director's interest in manga is well-documented, but in the case of Parasyte, the rights acquisition may have been part of a complex legal issue, acquiring it to prevent ambulance-chasing lawsuits about the similarities between its shape-shifting aliens and the abilities of the T2000 in Terminator 2. There were certainly moments in the manga that bore a coincidental resemblance to iconic scenes in Cameron's 1991 movie, and as a result, Parasyte stayed out of other media for over 20 years. Despite winning awards in comic form and bagging itself a Seiun (Japan's Hugo award) for best science fiction, it didn't make the obvious jump to anime or feature film until 2014, when it suddenly exploded into both formats. This delay has done it no harm at all, not the least in its evocations of modern terrorism – Shinichi is a double agent inside a sleeper cell, committed to preventing atrocities on his home turf.

As if two movies were not enough, Parasyte was also adapted as animation – arguably a medium more suited to the sudden outbreaks of alien shape-shifting. But Takashi Yamazaki's live-action version also benefits from a generation of falling prices in digital effects, allowing him to inject heavy doses of rubber-bodied violence. It doesn't always work, with the nature of Migi's host leading Shinichi to literally hold his assailants at arm's length, but most of the time, talky scenes of threats and scheming convincingly erupt into savage collisions of snapping flesh, often part-hidden in the shadows or obscured on scratchy CCTV. **GM**

Parasyte (the movie) is released in the UK on 11 April by Manga Entertainment. The anime **Parasyte: the Maxim** follows on 2 May.



||| IN ASSOCIATION WITH |||

JAPAN 

Journeys



AFTER PARASYTE?

Creator Hitoshi Iwaaki left science fiction behind after his award-winning success with Parasyte. He spent the rest of the 1990s writing The Country of Tanabata, a murder mystery set in the countryside where ancient rituals are found to be performed on corpses. Then in 2003 he started his new magnum opus, already longer-running than Parasyte itself. Historie is an epic manga biography of Eumenes, an associate of Aristotle who ends up as the secretary to Alexander the Great, and a major player in the power struggle that followed his master's death. No alien parasites here... at least not yet.

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TECH KNOW

THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY // THE COOLEST GADGETS

Apple March On

What has Apple got planned for their next phase of development?

Of course, the thing about print magazine deadlines is that occasionally you miss out on a major event because the magazine has to go off to be printed. Such is the case this month as the tech rumourmill is buzzing with the news that Apple is preparing to reveal its development secrets at an event on 21 March. From what we hear there will be updated kit and even possibly new hardware.

Typically, Apple likes to keep its cards close to its chest, but that doesn't stop the internet from going into meltdown as it tries to predict what is to be revealed. We spent way longer than we probably should sifting through the nonsense to bring you what we believe to be the definitive guide to what Apple will announce. Probably not many surprises, but a definite improvement to their line-up.



iPhone SE

The highlight of the show is likely to be the much-rumoured iPhone 5SE, 6C or (more likely) SE, which will be a new lower-priced iPhone with a smaller screen than the 6s, but a lot of its power. In fact, many have pointed out the fact that the 5C has now been removed from the Apple store as the clearest indicator yet that Apple is planning on updating the phone. Despite the whole smartphone world looking to larger screen sizes, Apple seem intent on keeping a smaller one on their range, and the 5C, which was released three years ago, is long overdue an upgrade. Cue the iPhone SE, a new phone the size of the 5C but with a tweaked design to keep it more in line with the 6S and more power, obviously. The SE is rumoured to have the latest A9 processor chip, along with a 12MP camera on the rear, a 1.2MP on the front, Apple Pay support, a larger battery and possibly Touch ID – although it's unlikely to include the 3D touch feature found on the 6S.

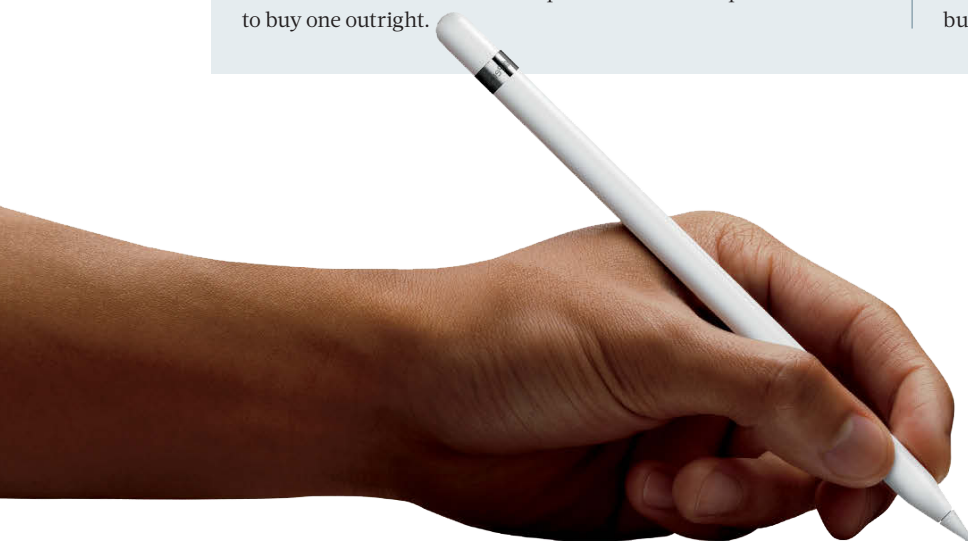
The SE will come in a range of colours that will mostly mimic that of the 6S, and the price should be low enough to tempt those who'd like an iPhone but would prefer either a cheaper contract or to buy one outright.

iPad Air 3

While all of the information we've managed to gather surrounding the iPad Air 3 is obviously unconfirmed at the time of going to press by Apple themselves, it seems that Apple is using some of the elements of the iPad Pro on their mid-range tablet. So a four speaker system seems likely, as well as a smart connector.

You're unlikely to see 3D touch on the Air 3 and the processor is also long overdue an overhaul, so it's fair to say that you can expect this new iPad to be comparable with its bigger brother. And for those of you desperate to shell out for an Apple Pencil, then the chances are that the updated Air would be compatible with that, too.

Controversially, we're also led to believe that Apple is considering making the Air 3 even thinner, shaving off around a millimetre from the depth of the tablet. The only feasible way they could do this would be to include a smaller battery, but would Apple really sacrifice battery life just to create a thinner iPad? Well, knowing Apple it's always a possibility, but we hope that's one rumour that ends up being unfounded.



Apple Watch 2

Despite it nearly being a year since the Apple Watch was released, we're not expecting Apple to use the event to update their wearable tech – the wise money is on them releasing the Watch 2 in September, along with the iPhone 7. Watch users won't be completely left out though, as we've heard mutterings of a new range of straps, or maybe even a 'smart strap'.

The US Patent Office released an Apple patent last December for a strap featuring a 'woven display' that could be worn and then attach itself magnetically to any Apple device to show information about it – such as messages and missed calls. Is this something in the works from Apple, or just another design that's destined to be lost in time?



ONE MORE THING...



In a tradition that was started by Steve Jobs, Apple likes to end an event with the line "And there's one more thing", teasing the hyperventilating fanboy audience who they'd kept waiting for hours for an announcement of a new piece of original kit. Of course everyone's secretly hoping that Apple could use the event to bring something original out of their shiny bag of goodies.

Rumoured devices that Apple are working on include a new Macbook with Intel's super-powerful new Skylake chips, the oft-mentioned Apple Car and even a tablet/laptop hybrid to compete with the hugely popular Microsoft Surface. Could any of those make an appearance? Probably not, but as companies such as Samsung, LG and Microsoft continue to innovate and break into new areas, all eyes are now on Apple to see what their response is.

LEGENDARY 'ONE MORE THING' ANNOUNCEMENTS

There's even a name for them in business, 'Stevenotes'. Those 'one more thing' announcements that could cause a major swing in Apple stock. Here's a look at the most legendary 'one more things' that Steve delivered...

1998 // iMAC
1999 // iBOOK
2000 // OSX
2001 // IPOD
2007 // IPHONE
2010 // IPAD



Future Shocks

Fancy a trip into space? Those with \$250,000 to spare can reach for the stars...

A pilot himself, Harrison Ford was keen to learn all about the VSS Unity from chief pilot Dave Mackay.



VIRGIN GALACTIC

Virgin is back in the space race, with the recent unveiling of VSS Unity, Virgin Galactic's craft that will take those rich enough up to the heavens.

If you remember, tragedy struck Virgin Galactic's first attempt when one of the two test pilots was killed when a test flight ended with the rocket ship braking apart in mid-air. Lessons have obviously been learnt and a new craft has been built using the test data and a similar design to the first model.

Although other companies (including Amazon) are already testing their own space flight programmes, Virgin hope that theirs will soon catch up with the competition, and have a list of celebrity

"TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE SPACE ACCESSIBLE IN A WAY THAT HAS ONLY BEEN DREAMT OF BEFORE NOW"

endorsers behind them. A-listers have been queuing up to hand over their money for the opportunity to fly into space, but two that get a cheeky freebie are Stephen Hawking and Kate Winslet (as a thank you as she saved Branson's mother from a fire in 2011).

After the publicity of the launch, it's down to business as Virgin hope to launch their first commercial flight next year. Before that though they need to complete a series of successful test missions at full speed and full altitude –

which is around 62 miles up! Richard Branson enthused, "Together we can make space accessible in a way that has only been dreamt of before now, and by doing so can bring positive change to life on Earth. Our beautiful new spaceship, VSS Unity, is the embodiment of that goal and also a great testament to what can be achieved when true teamwork, great skill and deep pride are combined with a common purpose." We just think it's a real shame he didn't deliver his speech in a Buzz Lightyear outfit.

SPACE BY NUMBERS

When Virgin is ready to launch we'll be happy to run a competition for a free flight in Geeky Monkey, in the meantime here are some numbers and facts...

FIRST FLIGHT // 2017 (APPROX)
COST // \$250,000 (£164,000)
FLYING FROM // NEW MEXICO
PASSENGERS PER FLIGHT // 6
ALTITUDE // 100KM
LENGTH OF FLIGHT // 90 MINUTES
NUMBER SIGNED UP // 700
CELEBRITIES SIGNED UP
// TOM HANKS
// BRAD PITT
// JUSTIN BIEBER
// RUSSELL BRAND
// KATY PERRY
// LEONARDO DICAPRIO
// ANGELINA JOLIE
// ASHTON KUTCHER



HEAD-TO-HEAD...

All of the major phone manufacturers have released new models in the last six months, so we thought it would be interesting to see how the new Galaxy S7 stacks up against the opposition...



Galaxy S7

SCREEN // 5.1"
 RESOLUTION // 2560 X 1440
 PIXEL DENSITY // 577 PPI
 STORAGE // 32GB/64GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 12MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 5MP
 RAM // 4GB
 PRICE // FROM £35 PM



LG G5

SCREEN // 5.3"
 RESOLUTION // 2560 X 1440
 PIXEL DENSITY // 554 PPI
 STORAGE // 32GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 16MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 8MP
 RAM // 4GB
 PRICE // TBA



iPhone 6s

SCREEN // 4.7"
 RESOLUTION // 1334 X 750
 PIXEL DENSITY // 326 PPI
 STORAGE // 16GB-128GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 12MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 5MP
 RAM // 2GB
 PRICE // FROM £32 PM



Huawei Mate 8

SCREEN // 6"
 RESOLUTION // 1920 X 1080
 PIXEL DENSITY // 368 PPI
 STORAGE // 32GB/64GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 16MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 8MP
 RAM // 4GB
 PRICE // TBA



Sony Xperia Z5

SCREEN // 5.2"
 RESOLUTION // 1920 X 1080
 PIXEL DENSITY // 428 PPI
 STORAGE // 32GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 23MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 5.1MP
 RAM // 3GB
 PRICE // FROM £27.50 PM



Nexus 6P

SCREEN // 5.7"
 RESOLUTION // 2560 X 1440
 PIXEL DENSITY // 518 PPI
 STORAGE // 32GB-128GB
 CAMERA [REAR] // 12.3MP
 CAMERA [FRONT] // 8MP
 RAM // 3GB
 PRICE // FROM £35 PM

CONCLUSION

After finally releasing a phone last year that looked as good as it performed, Samsung has this year given us one that is more evolution than revolution. Its power has been beefed up and the camera improved, but aside from a couple of new features (waterproofing being the main one), the S7 is surprisingly similar. As 2016 seems to be the year of VR though, Samsung is pushing their Gear VR headset though, and the S7's increased power makes it the ideal phone to run the more advanced VR apps that will be coming out this year.

The iPhone's stats may seem low compared to some of the other phones, but Apple has always been master of design (both internal and external), so although it only comes with 2GB of RAM, the iPhone uses a range of very clever memory management tools to make sure everything still runs quickly.

If you want to move away from the big two though then the new LG G5 deserves some serious consideration – especially with its modular design. It's the first smartphone where you're able to add additional hardware to boost its capabilities, meaning that you could add better speakers, a larger battery or even a video projector.

TOP GEAR

SO MUCH EXCELLENT TECH, SO LITTLE TIME AND MONEY. TO ENSURE YOU SPEND YOUR HARD-EARNED BITCOIN ON THE RIGHT DEVICES, WE TEST THEM FOR YOU...



HTC Vive

FROM £747 // HTCVIVE.COM // AVAILABLE, NOW (PRE-ORDER)

Okay, so you've been seduced by this whole VR thing but you thought that Google Cardboard was a bit lame. Where next? The answer is with HTC's Vive, the first 'proper' commercially available VR unit. The unit comes with a couple of sensors to track your movements and a pair of handsets for on-screen hand movement. This all connects up to a PC (and a beefy one at that), which transfers the information from the game installed on the computer through to the headset. Basically, if you're looking for the best way to immerse yourself in the VR world then this is currently the best way to do it, as the results are massively impressive.



Fitbit Blaze

£160 // FITBIT.COM/UK/BLAZE // AVAILABLE, NOW

Fitbit, the makers of affordable fitness trackers for some time now, has finally done the inevitable and mixed their tech with a watch to create the all-new Fitbit Blaze. And it's actually pretty good. The Blaze comes with all the usual digital watch features like call, text and calendar plus an impressive five day battery life. Then you add in a range of fitness-tracking elements that can be monitored via the watch or an app that's linked to it. It all works very well, and the Blaze is surprisingly comfortable on the wrist, too. The best bit? It'll set you back just £160.



Raspberry Pi 3

£30 // RASPERRYPI.ORG // AVAILABLE, NOW

Here comes the third slice of Pi. It comes complete with WiFi and Bluetooth compatibility. They've also bumped up the processor to a 1.2GHz 64-bit quad-core ARMv8, so although it's not going to be able to run much in the games department, it's still 50% more powerful than the one found in the Pi2. Incredibly, it also comes with 4 USB ports, and HDMI, Ethernet, Micro SC and 3.5mm jack connections. The Pi is on course to become the most popular British computer of all time. Project founder Eben Upton claims that they'll overtake the eight million sales figure of the Amstrad PCW in the next couple of months.



LG G5

£TBA // LG.COM/UK/MOBILE-PHONES/G5 // AVAILABLE, APRIL

Rather than being just a standard update there are actually a couple of innovative features in the new LG. Firstly, it's the first smartphone with a modular design, meaning that you can slide off the bottom of the phone and attach all manner of expandable devices – like a camera grip module, a sound expander or a video projector. The camera has also been beefed up, with two on the back of the device – a standard one and a 135-degree wide angle one, too. Finally, the G5 comes with an always-on display, so you can leave your phone in sleep mode and it'll display the time and date throughout the night, and with only a miniscule drain on the battery.

NO GAME NO LIFE



Collector's Edition out now

Art box with DVD, Blu-ray and triple CD soundtrack plus art cards





Standard DVD and Blu-ray

Out 28 March



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PLAYTIME BEFORE COMPUTERS WAS HARD. YOU HAD TO GO OUTSIDE, OR USE A PENCIL. THEN ALONG CAME MB ELECTRONICS...



REMEMBERING...

COMPUTER BATTLESHIP



WHAT THE HELL IS COMPUTER BATTLESHIP?

“You sank my battleship!” echoed from the teak push button TV back in 1977 – there was no escaping the television ad for MB Electronics’ latest game. And the ad worked. All the cool kids got Computer Battleship for Christmas that year. With ‘instant programming’ and ‘spectacular lights and sounds’ the electronic game really brought Battleship to life. Kids had been playing Battleship in one form or another for decades of course – it actually dates from World War I. All you really need is a piece of paper, a pencil and a grid each. The two players place their ships, then have a go at guessing where their rival’s ships are. In this updated version you get plastic ships to place on the sea grid, two sliders allow you to select the positions and a big red fire button to let them have it!

WHY DID YOU WANT IT?

Before Computer Battleship the most fun you could have with these new fangled ‘electronic games’ was Operation buzzing away while you took out someone’s appendix. You have to remember this was three years before the first home computers started to appear with the likes of the Sinclair ZX80 in 1980. Being able to ‘program’ the computer was a real thrill. In actual fact, it really was thrilling. Switching the game on you get a constant ‘ping-bib’ of a sonar as it appears to be scanning the sea for enemy ships. The machine ‘beeps’ as you enter the coordinates for your next guess, then the fire button has a very satisfying ‘peow’ sound effect. Then you wait with baited breath. Sometimes nothing – but sometimes you get a ‘kerboom’ and know that you have hit a ship.

IS IT AS AWESOME AS YOU REMEMBER?

No, not really. The game itself still holds up well, but it’s the laborious programming that will have you reaching for the Battleship app for your phone instead. Every single co-ordinate for your ships, and your opponent’s ships, must be entered one at a time into the memory. Switch off and it’s of course all gone and you start over.

CAN I GET ONE?

Once again ebay is your friend. There were various models produced of Computer Battleship, so you can pick one up for around £20. Beware of the retro reseller websites that will try to charge you upwards of £80 for a mint condition game – they’re not worth that. Always check that you have the ten ships with it too – two aircraft carriers, two battleships, two destroyers, two submarines and two torpedo boats.



**BEFORE COMPUTER
BATTLESHIP THE MOST
FUN YOU COULD HAVE WITH
THESE NEW FANGLED 'ELECTRONIC
GAMES' WAS OPERATION**



In many sets the red and white pegs have been vastly diminished, which makes it kind of unplayable.





E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL [1982]

directed by

STEVEN SPIELBERG

featuring

HENRY THOMAS // ELLIOTT

DREW BARRYMORE // GERTIE

What we can possibly tell a Geeky Monkey reader about E.T.? The movie was on every Christmas for most of our childhoods, and secured Steven Spielberg's place as the King of epic sci-fi. Well he did co-produce, direct and write it [along with Melissa Mathison].

Spielberg based E.T. on an imaginary friend he had as a kid to help him through his parents' divorce. The movie was such a blockbuster success when it released in the summer of 1982 that it pushed Star Wars off the top spot to become the highest-grossing movie of all time.

“E.T. PHONE HOME”



TABLETOP

Words: **ROB BURMAN**

Rob is the editor of Tabletop Gaming magazine



MARAUDING ZOMBIES, MONSTERS, MAGIC AND TRIVIA CARDS. IT MUST BE TIME TO PLAY SOME BOARD GAMES...

One of problems – and we’re classing this very much in the first world category here – of tabletop gaming is that typically they tend to need several players. So, when you and the other half are sitting at home desperate not to subject yourself to the perils of Saturday night telly, it can be hard to play something that makes the most of just a couple of players.

Step into the light Odin’s Ravens (Osprey Games, £16.99) which is an experience that’s designed specifically for two. As the name would suggest, the game features Odin’s two birds: Huginn and Muinn, who must race around the world in order to see who is the fastest. Players do this by moving along landscape cards that make the race track. To move your chosen bird you play cards from your hand that match the landscape

A WONDERFULLY TACTICAL GAME THAT CAN BE PLAYED IN SHORT BURSTS OF AROUND 20 MINUTES

you want to move to: so fields for a field, forest for a forest. However, things get tricky (quite literally) with the inclusion of Loki cards. You see the trickster god likes to mess things up and on your turn you can also play Loki cards, which could mess up the plans of your rival by moving landscape cards around, knocking a bird back a space or even creating shortcuts to make your progress faster. The result is a wonderfully tactical game that can be played in short bursts of around 20 minutes. Plus, it’s worth mentioning that, although Odin’s Ravens was previously released a few years ago, Osprey has done a top notch job updating it with some cracking artwork.

Actually, while we’re on the subject of two-player games, it’s most definitely worth checking out Marvel Dice Masters: The Amazing Spider-Man Starter (WizKids, £13.99). In case



THE CHARACTERS ARE ACTUALLY HIGHLY DETAILED 28MM MINIATURES AND MANTIC HAS DONE A GREAT JOB OF CAPTURING THEIR LIKENESSES



you've never come across Dice Masters before, the game revolves around a mix of collectable cards and dice, which represent some of Marvel's greatest comic book heroes and villains. As you might expect, this new edition includes some of Spidey's finest allies and foes including Venom, Ghost Rider and Kingpin, among others.

You can create your dream team of characters by choosing from the 44 custom dice – which all feature little icons to represent the iconic heroes/villains – and then randomly choosing them from a bag before scrapping against your opponent. It's super addictive and, although this starter set has everything you need to try it out, there are also booster packs that potentially include even stronger characters... just be prepared to mop up the tears of your wallet/purse.

Finally, if you like the idea of trying out a miniatures-based wargame but don't fancy faffing about putting together all those models and then painting them, it might be worth taking a look at Shadows Over Normandie (Devil Pig Games, £45). That's because instead of miniatures, you have to use cards to represent various troops... in fact, it's reminiscent of the classic Amiga game Cannon Fodder.

Based on the previously released Heroes of Normandie, this latest edition has been given a Cthulhu-themed makeover, courtesy of Modiphius Entertainment and its fantastic Achtung! Cthulhu role-playing game. So now as well as playing as the heroic Allies or the evil Axis, you can also take control of the terrible Ancient Ones, as seen in the works of HP Lovecraft. There are ten missions to play through, which introduces you to the simple game mechanics and, although it can look a little intimidating at first, it's actually a wonderfully intuitive system that features some clever little twists, such as bluffing your opponent with fake moves. **GM**

Featuring Spider-Man, Ghost Rider and Kingpin, the Dice Masters game is perfect for two players.



THE WALKING DEAD: ALL OUT WAR

Here's a game to mark in your diaries for later this year: The Walking Dead: All Out War from Mantic Games. Based on the amazing comics, rather than the television series, All Out War pits gangs of survivors against each other as they fight over the limited resources of post zombie apocalypse America. Players create gangs from iconic characters featured in the comics, like Rick, Carl and Michonne before heading to the streets of Georgia for a bit of rough and tumble.

The characters are actually highly detailed 28mm miniatures and Mantic has done a great job of capturing their likenesses. They're not alone though and maps are populated by deadly Walkers (zombies to the uninitiated) who will charge towards survivors if they make too much noise.

A little like the previously mentioned Shadows Over Normandie, The Walking Dead: All Out War is meant to be a bridge between board games and much larger (and more complicated) wargames. As such you'll be measuring stuff out with a ruler, like a wargame, but using much simpler elements like customised dice for combat, to ensure things don't become too complicated. The Walking Dead: All Out War was recently successfully funded on Kickstarter (it raised \$685K) and is due for release around Halloween.

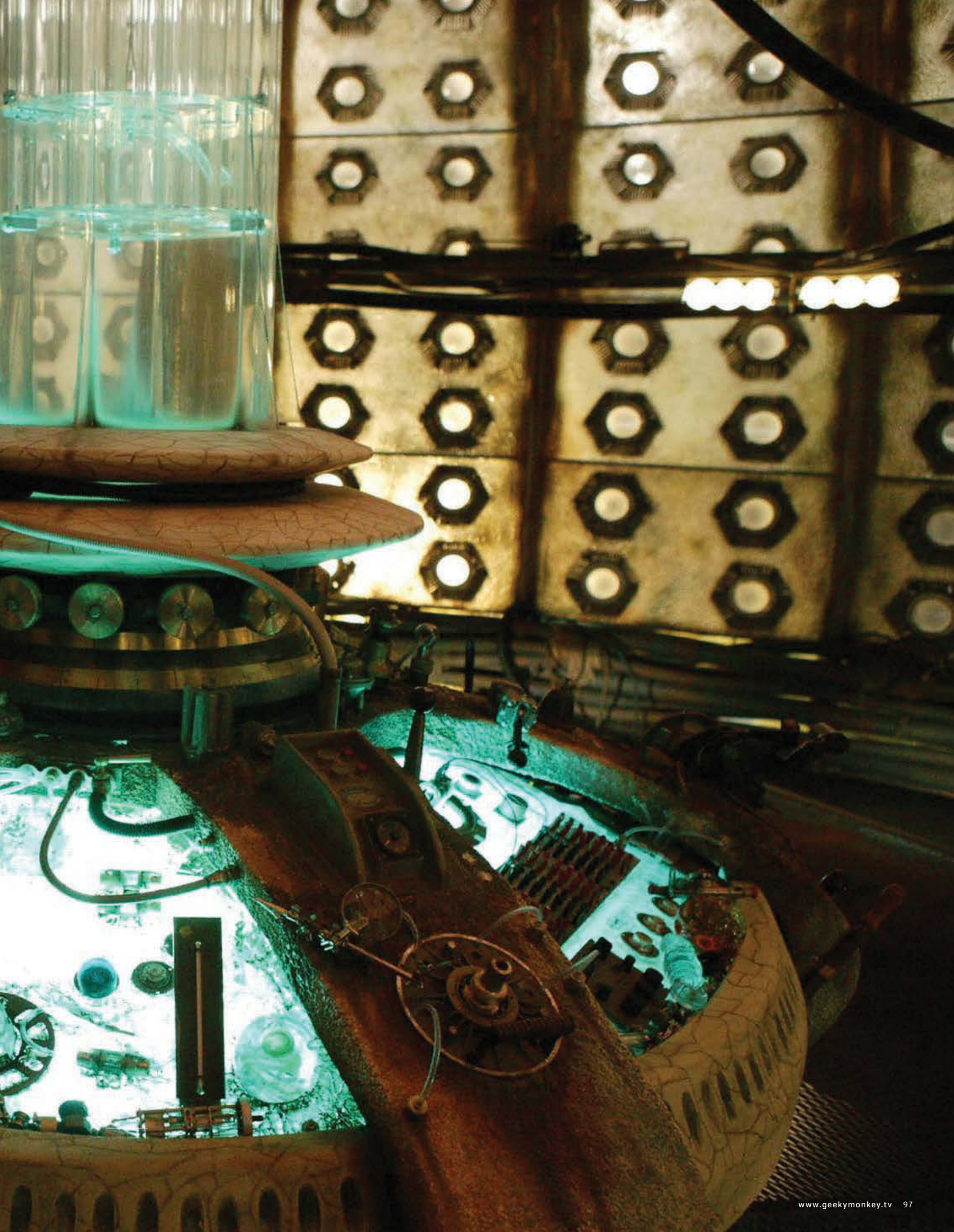


TAKING ASSORTED RECYCLING & REAMING UP INCREDIBLE SETS & PROPS



MARK CORDORY HAS BEEN MAKING INCREDIBLE THINGS OUT OF FOUND ITEMS FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS. WITH A PASSION FOR LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY AND A CAREER THAT HAS INCLUDED DOCTOR WHO, TORCHWOOD AND KNIGHTMARE, WE ROOTED THROUGH HIS BINS TO FIND OUT MORE...

Interview: NICK ROBERTS





Rewind to 2004 and the BBC is shooting a revival series of Doctor Who in an old carpet warehouse in Newport. Christopher Eccleston is to become the Ninth Doctor, and is about to rescue Billie Piper's Rose Tyler from an Auton artificial life form attack, then invite her to travel with him on the TARDIS. The TARDIS interior has been built, with old carpets used for sound dampening. Look more closely and behind the carpet, within earshot of the TARDIS main stage, you will find Mark Cordory, gluegun in hand, creating a raygun out of some pieces of plastic and a windscreen wiper. Mark went on to become the Head of Props Fabrication for Doctor Who at BBC Wales and created many of the incredible objects seen on screen. We sat down for a chat about his long career in practical effects...

If you're asked by someone, "What do you do for a living?", how do you describe what you do? Generally my shorthand is "I make stuff" and we go from there. I'm such a difficult person to put into a small category really, but I do. I make stuff. My passport says I'm a designer because I also design stuff, but I work in so many different mediums. I'm not just a mask maker, I'm not just a costume maker, puppet maker, props maker, leather worker – I'm not just one thing. I kind of just like making stuff.

You've made some incredible objects, costumes and creatures in your career. Where do you get your inspiration? By looking at other people's work generally. You look at things that have been done in a similar vein and you get inspired. So many artists inspire me: Bryan Froud, Roger Dean, HR Giger – how can you not be inspired by artists like that? Now that you've got facilities like Pinterest, you have this fantastic resource where lots of very creative people put their work up and you go, "Oh, I really like that element of that work." I take something from their piece and I'm inspired to do something of my own stemming off from that, as all artists have done for all eternity.

Do you prefer the more gory and gruesome projects, or cool, detailed, intricate work? For me it's the detail. I love things that you can actually hold and look at in your hand and it still looks real. Working on things like theatrical props is different as you're looking

at them from an auditorium, they don't have to have that same level of detail. But what I enjoy is the variety in my work. I have spent a lot of time doing post apocalyptic stuff over the last year or so, that has really interested me. I love the aging techniques and it fits very well with the way I like to make things. It's an assembly process – I take shapes and objects and recombine them. If you look at a lot of my work, particularly the props for Doctor Who, you will see that most props are actually made from other things. It's a way of working that I enjoy and it lends itself perfectly to post apocalyptic because you're salvaging items and putting them together to perform another function in the story.

So I bet you can often be found scavenging for parts in junkyards and car boot sales. Oh God yeah! Car boot sales are a definite resource for finding stuff. In the summer months there are a few good car boot sales locally where I can be found haggling for bits. I've no idea what I'm going to make out of them but I might like the shape and know it will end up becoming something. For the post apocalyptic look I need shapes in metals, plastics, leather, fabrics – whatever I can get my hands on. I do a lot of leather work – I love it. It's one of the very few materials I work with that isn't actively trying to poison me. You do end up with a lot of dust and fumes from the stuff I work with.

You started Mythlore back in 1985 to bring the world of Live Action Role Playing to life. What kind of things did the company create? Yes, LARP has been a passion of mine for many years. Not quite from its inception in the UK, but not long after, I jumped on the bandwagon. If you don't know what Live Roleplaying is... if you've heard of Dungeons & Dragons, it's kind of doing that for real. It's immersive, world building gameplay with amazing potential. When it first started it was all about the high fantasy sword and sorcery stuff. But now, thirty years down the line, the hobby covers every genre you can think of, and globally as well.

In 1989 you joined Talismen Studios where you worked on creations that our readers will remember well – Maid Marian and her Merry Men with Tony Robinson and Iron Maiden's Eddie for their tour. What stand out moments are there for you from this time? Moving to



Talismen was my first real experience of working in TV. I was working for a friend of mine who I had been to university with, Bill Talbot. He had started up his own company in Cardiff and asked me to come along and work with him. We started out doing two seasons making props which were fun for Maid Marian and her Merry Men. It was very simple stuff, like taking a plant sprayer, wrapping it in cloth and making it look like a medieval plant sprayer.

Working with Iron Maiden was good – I sweated for that job. We did a tour of Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Box near Bath, then down to The Sanctuary Studios in London in one day to get the job. The problem was that I was dressed in full prosthetic zombie gear, carrying a dead corpse over my shoulder while the two gentlemen I went with did most of the talking. The message was "Look, we can do stuff!" I even went to lunch in the pub around the corner from the London studio in full costume! About nine months later we got a call saying "Do you want to design an Eddie for the next Iron Maiden album?" and we thought "Phwor, yeah!" Our Eddie was a sort of batwing creature with long trailing tail and swirling mouths, ribs and eyes – tormented souls with a long Eddie face. He did the Monsters of Rock tour with the band, and was on a T-shirt – I kick myself because I didn't buy a shirt!

Then at Talismen we also did Knightmare for ITV in the mid-90s. I designed and sculpted the full body version of Smirkanorf the dragon for Knightmare, I painted him and was part of the team that went to Anglia Studios and dressed in a blue suit in a blue room puppeteering him with rods for all the flying sequences. The following year I created a head that would talk in close-up, frown and blink. I am very proud of Knightmare. To realise that a dragon that I sculpted became such a big part of people's childhoods is great. I'm part of that story in some small way.

There's a strong HP Lovecraft theme in your work – what do you love about his writing and characters? The imagination, and also the unknown. The fact that it's not all laid out on a plate for you. I'm not a fan of films and stories where everything has to be explained away and neatly wrapped up. No, the stories that make you think about them the most are the ones where there are a lot of questions left. There are hints of things that are beyond our comprehension. Hints that we are just specks in a nightmarish universe. I guess he carved



"I AM VERY PROUD OF KNIGHTMARE. TO REALISE THAT A DRAGON THAT I SCULPTED BECAME SUCH A BIG PART OF PEOPLE'S CHILDHOODS IS GREAT"

out a niche market that has endured and inspired a lot of artists in a lot of genres. For me it was making stuff. I've made a costume for LARP where they asked me to make something I really liked, so I chose a Lovecraft Cthulhu.

You went on to become Head of Department for props at Doctor Who, Torchwood and The Sarah Jane Adventures for BBC Wales. What creations are you most proud of from this time? When I started full-time on Doctor Who, I had actually put together a proposal with some other people I had worked with on The Corpse Bride, the Tim Burton movie. We put together a proposal to run the creature shop for the new rebooted Doctor Who, Millennium FX got that, but I got the phone call offering me Head of Props Fabrication.

My first full episode of Doctor Who was the first Dalek episode with Christopher Eccleston as The Doctor. My first workshop was a cupboard under the stairs in the Millennium Stadium where they were shooting some scenes, and the first prop I made as head of department was a pistol made out of a box of bits they had given me saying, "We need a space gun, can you make one?" It was made out of a PlayStation2 gun and a few bits and pieces, sat in the cupboard under the stairs with a gluegun. I actually raided the boot of my car and found a couple of old windscreen wipers – they went on. A torch, a handfree phone clip – they went on – and an old inhaler as a tribute ▶



“I MADE THE ORIGINAL SONIC LIPSTICK FOR SARAH JANE ADVENTURES AND SOME RESTRAINING CUFFS FOR THE DOCTOR AND ROSE”

to wheezy, asthmatic geeks like me everywhere. The gun didn't even get used. It was picked up and put down again. It was part of a scene where The Doctor goes through a big box of bits to find a big gun that we made out of an interior of an old Dyson vacuum cleaner.

Eventually I had a desk on a mezzanine in the same room as the TARDIS. Whenever they were filming on the TARDIS I had to stop working, the only thing between my workshop and the set was some carpet that deadened the sound. So, it was not glamorous! A lot of love and determination to do the best we could went into the show.

If anyone asked, “What's the proudest point of your career to date?” it would have to be my first year at Doctor Who. I walked onto the set and there was the TARDIS. I was born in 1961, so my first Doctor was Patrick Troughton. I grew into it with Jon Pertwee, and then kind of drifted out with Tom Baker. How could somebody who grew up with Doctor Who not be excited to work on it? For me it was a real passion.

Tell us what it was like to work on the iconic TARDIS. I was asked to come on set to dress the TARDIS because it didn't feel like it linked up. They felt it was just random bits bolted to the console. I used old aircraft pieces and panels, and old brass and wood. On one of the Christopher Eccleston episodes he appears to be pumping on a bicycle pump at one point – it was actually an old wooden plant spray – that was me! There was also a handbrake from a Mini.

They kind of let him work out how he flew the TARDIS – just pull and push levers and buttons. The Doctor decides what does what. I went in and linked stuff up for a couple of days. I cheekily put in a few bits from my dad's own workshop. For me, creatively as a kid, my first real feeling of making stuff was with him. Airfix, elastic bands, planes. His garage was a treasure trove of bits that I inherited when he died. I put many of these bits into the TARDIS as a tribute to my dad. I worked on the Doctor Who era of Christopher Eccleston through to the first year and a half of David Tennant – I'm very proud of what I created.

Did we see in your gallery that you created a Sonic Screwdriver? I was responsible for some of the stunt screwdrivers in Doctor Who, yes. I also made the original sonic lipstick for Sarah Jane Adventures and some restraining cuffs for The Doctor and Rose in the episode The Long Game. Millennium FX actually made the electronic Sonic Screwdriver, but it was very delicate with microswitches. Christopher Eccleston is a very physical actor and it would get dropped and thrown. It would come back to me to see if I could get it working again. Eventually it was decided my department would duplicate it in resin so he could throw them around – that's our original department's claim to fame on the first Sonic Screwdriver.

Working on K-9 was nice. We were given one of the originals that had been used before. They wanted to redress the interior of him to echo the TARDIS so they passed it on to me. One of my wife's sisters was a massive K-9 fan as a kid, so when I had the opportunity to redress his insides I took a photograph of my wife's sister and stuck it inside one of the panels. You get to do these little things when you are in that position. The camera is never going to see them, but they are little tributes.

There's a plasma cannon in Torchwood where David Tennant takes this silvery gun from a character – that was made out of a super soaker that landed on my table one afternoon with the instruction to make it into a plasma cannon. On the bottom of that is a small label that says ‘powered by Morris the Cat’ – my cat at the time. Little nods that I know are there.

How do you feel when you see the toy versions of your props in the shops? Yes, that is quite a buzz. With the Sycorax, I did all the staffs for the first Christmas episode and they were made out of old pieces of wood from a quarry in South Wales, and sheep bones. Bits salvaged from car reclamation yards – but then they made little replica Sycorax. That's quite a buzz when you see something you've created be made into a toy. Captain Jack's Vortex Manipulator was good – it was almost an exact replica. ►



Mark updated the insides of K-9 to match the TARDIS before conceptualizing and constructing The Controller and creating throwable Sonic Screwdrivers!

Two of Mark's iconic creations: a blasted interior of a Dalek and Captain Jack's Vortex Manipulator.





With a career making the fantastic come to life in physical props, how do you feel about the use of green screen and CGI in modern movies and TV? I think thankfully it's finally coming out of the whole period where it appeared to be the only tool in the toolbox. When it came along originally CGI created a magic for those initial groundbreaking films. Take James Cameron's water face in *The Abyss*, or his T-1000 in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. Or *Jurassic Park* – and the first *Lord of the Rings* as well. In films like that it was groundbreaking. It created things where you went, "How the fuck did they do that?" It was like real magic, and then it became used and more used. What you lost is the magic, you no longer asked how it was done – it was done with CGI. And that became self defeating really.

I think good theatre or good special effects are very much akin to good stage magic. You need people to go away wondering how you did it. With CGI, where's the magic? I think in a broad sense the special effects industry went into a bit of a slump, the computer people went, "This is great, we're getting to do everything" while the practical effects people stood by. You compare John Carpenter's *The Thing* or *American Werewolf in London*. Groundbreaking practical special effects where you know it wasn't computer trickery, it was there, it was a real effect.

I feel it got overused, but now thankfully it's being drawn back. The new *Star Wars* film relies heavily on practical effects and it just feels right. BB-8 is a classic for me. When the first trailer came out for *The Force Awakens*, everyone assumed it was CGI. Then at one of the conventions they actually brought BB-8 out on the stage to prove it was a practical effect. The internet exploded with people getting fired up about it. Before people would just go, "Oh, it's CGI." With BB-8, they know they are being fooled, but they don't know how. This showmanship is really important.

It's similar in live roleplaying, in the events that I am involved with we have been trying to include practical magic. We are fortunate to be working with The Twins, a couple of stage magicians. They have provided us with a levitating fakir effect. They have a hand lightly resting on a walking stick but they appear to be levitating in mid-air. In the context of the game and the story – people walk in and see a young woman floating and people do a double-take. You know at that moment you've got them, people stop and question what they're looking at. That's what I think CGI lost for a long period, we're only just getting over the fact that it's not the only tool in the toolbox.

Plus, of course, it keeps me in a job! **GM**

Mark is currently working on injecting magic and film quality special effects into live action roleplaying. As part of Hive Mind he is creating an Arabian city with Larp-FX and Larptronics. Mark's Ninth and Tenth Doctor Who era is available on DVD from the BBC.



CREATING WORLDS

Mark Cordory has created an impressive body of work over his career, from intricate leatherwork to a Dalek space ship. You can gaze in awe at the galleries on Mark's website at markcordory.com

POST APOCALYPTIC



"I really enjoy the design process of creating the decayed look of the post nuclear survivor and playing around with the whole apocalyptic style. I've created a number of costumes and props for post apocalyptic Airsoft LARP."

LARP COSTUMES



"I continue to be involved in live action roleplay, and once a year I foolishly agree to spend far too much time helping to design and organise the New Lands events set in the Mystical East of the 1001 Arabian Nights."

PUPPETS



"I've made many puppets, mostly cable-controlled, almost all with at least 'Blink' and 'Frown' mechanisms, including a life size animatronic walking T-Rex and characters for the S4C show *Cawl Potsh*."

DOCTOR WHO



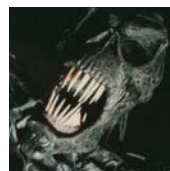
"I spent two years as Head of Props Fabrication on *Doctor Who* at BBC Wales, and a further year as a freelance props maker for *Doctor Who*, *Torchwood* and *The Sarah Jane Adventures*. I am very proud of my work on *Doctor Who*."

FILM & TV



"I have created props and sets for various film and television productions including books, buildings and beds for Tim Burton's *The Corpse Bride*. I did some illustration work and props for a BBC iPlayer pilot *Beast Hunters*."

EXHIBITIONS & DISPLAYS



"From world record-breaking trainers for Tesco to giant sculptures of footballers and Eddie for Iron Maiden. As ever, for these projects I worked in collaboration with a talented team to create things."

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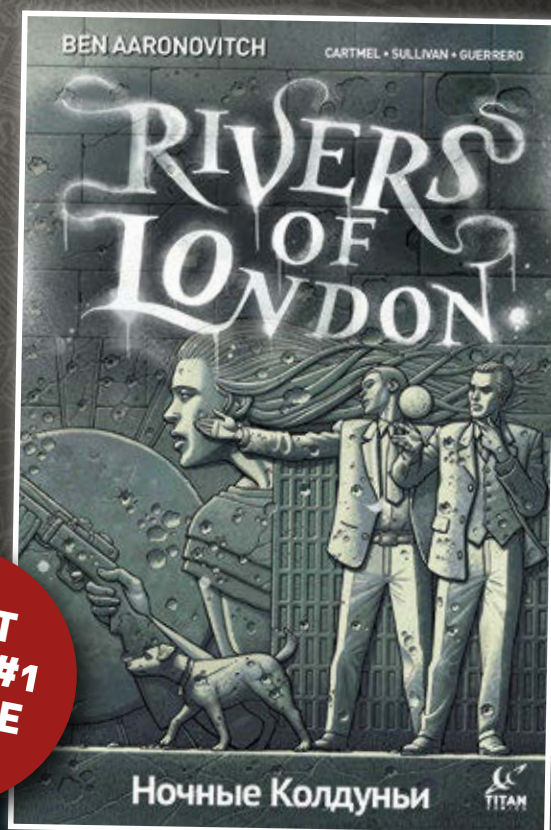
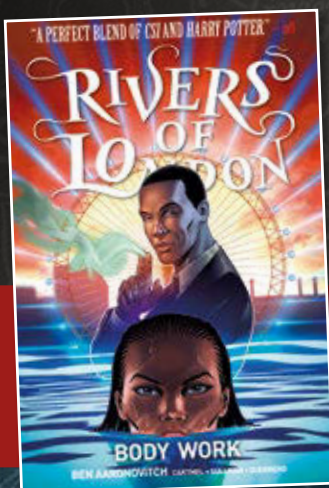
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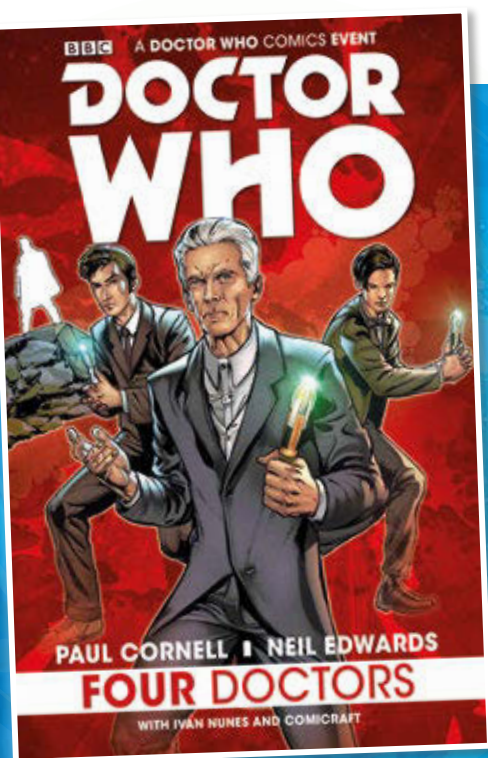
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BLAKE'S 7 (1978-1981)

NETWORK, BBC ONE // STARRING, PAUL DARROW, GARETH THOMAS
SEASONS, 4 // EPISODES, 52

THE DIRTY DOZEN IN SPACE

Words: MILES GUTTERY

Miles is an über geek and entertainment writer

Blake's 7 is the very definition of a cult TV show. High concept – check. Made in the Seventies – check. Cobbled together sets – check. Occasionally wooden acting – check. Most people know the name but hardly anyone really remembers anything about it – check.

The success of Star Wars provoked an insatiable appetite for Science fiction in the late Seventies and US shows like Battlestar Galactica and Buck Rogers became big hits. Not wanting to miss the party, the BBC commissioned Blake's 7, which first aired in 1978 with a massive ten million viewers tuning into the first episode.

The story is set against the backdrop of a dystopian future society in which the population of Earth is controlled by a sinister government that dopes the food and water supplies to keep the people placid. Roj Blake is a well known dissident who witnesses the murders of an activist group by security forces. Not wanting to martyr him, the authorities cook up a plan to exile him to a penal colony on the distant planet of Cygnus Alpha on trumped up charges. During the voyage, the prison transport ship stumbles upon an abandoned alien Starship which Blake and two of the other prisoners are able to steal, and so begin their adventures as space renegades.

While dated, the US sci-fi shows of the period have a certain gloss, while Blake's 7 oozes low-fi Britishness. So much so that it's not an easy watch at first. It's worth sticking with it though, as it's written well enough that slowly you start to see beyond the cardboard and sellotape studio sets. It's actually pretty dark stuff. With themes of a controlling state, slaughter of unarmed dissidents and the shooting of hostages, this isn't a show written for kids. In fact the charge Blake is fitted up with to discredit him is child molestation, so it's pretty strong stuff. It's also a slow-burner as well. It's not until the end of episode two that Blake and his accomplices finally get their hands on the iconic Liberator starship, and that demonstrates the writers' determination to anchor their characters with a proper back story and clear motivations. Blake is the idealist, the freedom fighter determined to bring down the corrupt regime, but his methods are sometimes difficult to accept. He'll use violence and he'll kill. Another of the convicts who helps Blake steal the Liberator, Kerr Avon, played with cynical assurance by Paul Darrow, is a very different character. He comes across cold and self-interested, but he struggles with the morality of some of Blake's decisions and offers the show an alternative conscience not immediately apparent in his personality. The characters are nuanced and flawed, which makes the show much more interesting.

It's also progressive in its casting of women, with strong female characters in pivotal roles. Jenna Stannis is a space pilot and convicted smuggler without whom Blake would never have been able to steal the Liberator in the first place. Cally is a telepathic Alien freedom fighter and young Glynis Barber joined the show in series four as gunslinger Soolin.

The series drew on many influences from George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and Aldous Huxley's seminal tale of worldwide dictatorship Brave New World to The Dirty Dozen and



US SCI-FI SHOWS OF THE PERIOD HAVE A CERTAIN GLOSS, WHILE BLAKE'S 7 OOZES LOW-FI BRITISHNESS

The Magnificent 7. There are also comparisons to be drawn with the legend of Robin Hood, political themes and Cold War comment. Sadly the show's budget is obviously way too small to do justice to the ideas behind it. However it's layered and interesting enough that you can look beyond the shonky sets and sub-Thunderbirds special effects.

Four series totalling 52 episodes were made between 1978 and 1981 with various audio and radio plays since, while the legacy remains alive with a new series of books being published. Check out the rather snazzy blakes7.com website for all the latest developments, and if you want a thoughtful and highly underappreciated sci-fi show to get into, grab the DVDs of the original series. **GM**



Blake's 7 may not have been on TV since 1981, but the stories live on in these audio productions from Big Finish.



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Do make sure you Like, Share and Tweet to all your Game of Thrones geeky friends and let them know about the competition too.

The winners will be chosen and notified on 28 April.

TERMS & CONDITIONS: This competition is open to readers of Geeky Monkey residing in the UK and Ireland. Employees of Uncooked Media Ltd and their families are not eligible to enter. One winner will be selected on 28 April 2016 and contacted via their Facebook or Twitter account. Prizes will be delivered to mainland UK and Ireland addresses only, and Uncooked Media Ltd reserves the right to withdraw one or all prizes without notification. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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GEEK CHIC

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THE FLY (1986)

DIRECTOR, DAVID CRONENBERG

BUZZING AROUND

Words: HUGH DAVID

Hugh is a regular contributor to NEO magazine

The other great example after last issue's *The Thing* (1982) of a first-class remake, the genius of this SF-horror rests on three qualities: the practical SFX, soon-to-be award-winning actors treating genre material with the respect it deserves, and horror-meister extraordinaire David Cronenberg in charge. If Eighties nerds and critics were already on board with Cronenberg's very particular brand of SF body horror, showcased brilliantly throughout the Seventies across his low-budget independent Canadian films, this second US studio film would bring in a brand new audience of younger geeks, scaring them silly and grossing them out simultaneously. Having been considered for, but then not directed, such films as *Dune*, *Return of the Jedi* and *Total Recall* (he was actually on the latter when he parted ways with legendary producer Dino de Laurentis and joined this), *The Fly* ended up being his biggest box-office success to date after his then-obligatory Stephen King adap *The Dead Zone* (still MIA in HD).

Based on a short story by Georges Langelaan, already adapted as a 1958 B-movie starring Vincent Price, beloved of the Famous Monsters of Filmland generation of geeks, this new version was produced by, of all people, Mel Brooks, who helped lobby for Cronenberg to direct. He then re-wrote the script from *Psycho III*'s Charles Edward Pogue; elements of Cronenberg's own filmic obsessions (disease as transformation, flesh interacting with technology, human sexuality) thus fused with *Frankenstein*, *Phantom of the Opera* and the original sources in just the way Goldblum's scientist Seth Brundle accidentally fuses with a fly on the genetic level when testing his experimental teleportation devices.

Up-and-comers Geena Davis and Jeff Goldblum were cast as the leads and delivered star-making turns, making characters who could have been clichéd, despite Cronenberg's re-writing of them, into living breathing adults with inner lives. Goldblum is simply a revelation, astonishing as the nerdy Seth living his dream but then inhabiting a nightmare of his own making, emoting brilliantly through the thick make-up and prosthetics right to when the latter replace him. Davis, going out with Goldblum at the time, modernises the 'spunky female reporter' of yesteryear for the post-feminist era, in control of herself and her wants, anchoring the humanity of the film as events become more extreme and Goldblum mutates further and further. She also qualifies with ease for *Scream Queen* status, standing tall alongside Sigourney Weaver's return the same year as *Ripley*. John Getz is pitch-perfect as her ex and work boss, a more traditional villain figure in a rom-com fashion until the final act, where he finds both punishment and redemption as only a horror movie can provide. Even smaller roles are well fleshed out, including memorable moments from famous Canadian boxer George Chuvalo, Michael Coperman (a familiar face over the years to geeks from several shot-in-Canada TV shows and DTV sequels) and *Quest For Fire*'s Joy Boushel.

Regular Cronenberg collaborator Howard Shore, now beloved of geeks for his work for Peter Jackson, composed what was then one of his most lyrical scores to date. SFX guru Chris Walas and his team opted for this film over *Gremlins II*, rising to the intense challenge of inventing brand-new materials and gags on a tight



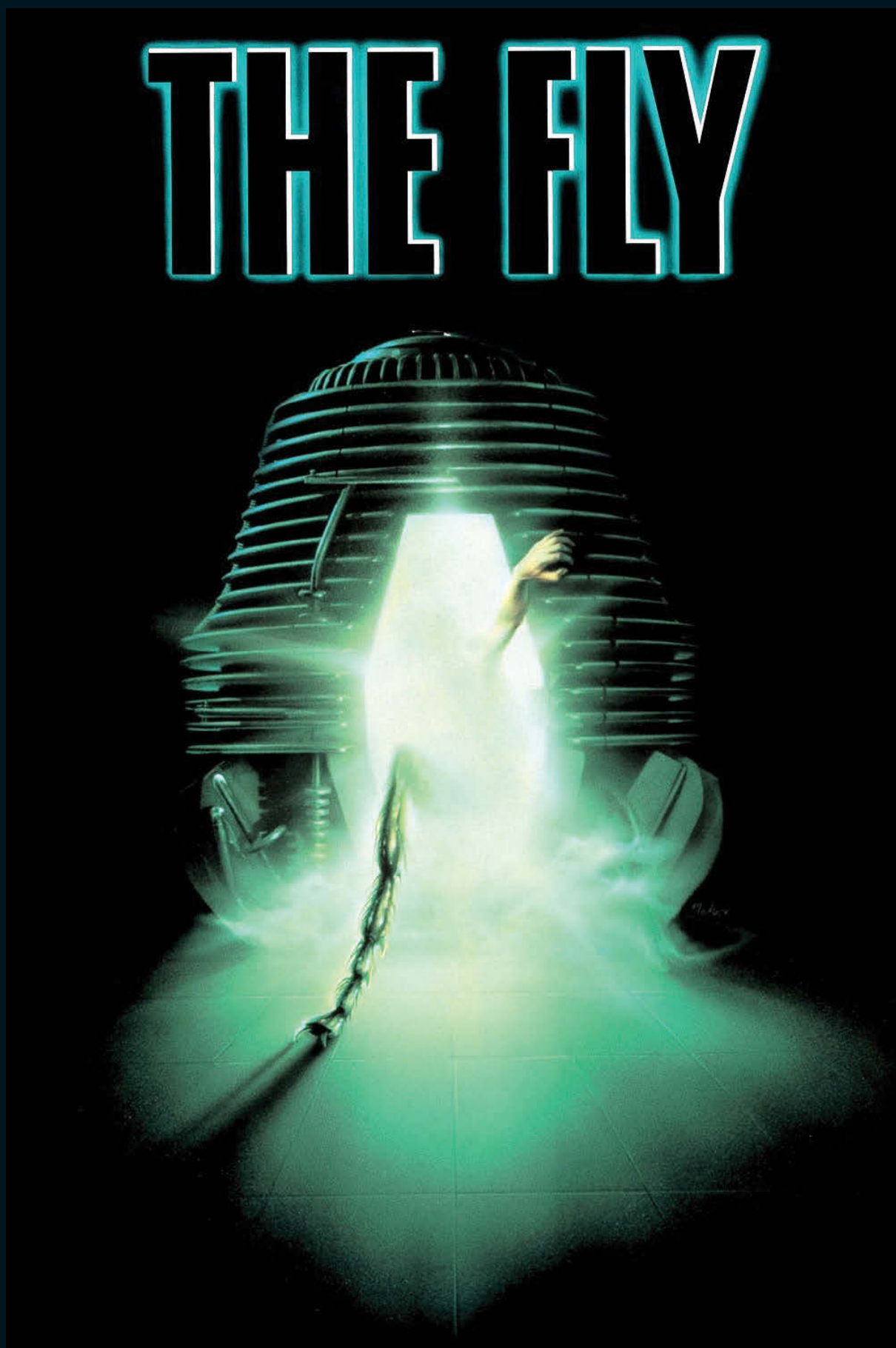
GOLDBLUM'S SCIENTIST SETH BRUNDLE ACCIDENTALLY FUSES WITH A FLY ON THE GENETIC LEVEL

schedule. Their work would become the stuff of nightmares for proto-geeks in their teens, this writer included, and rightly win them an Oscar and a Saturn. There's no question that everyone turned in their best on this, a career highlight for all.

The story allows the film to have distinct relevance to Eighties America, potentially offering reflections on the AIDS epidemic, cancer and the battle for a woman's right to choose. For movie geeks it offers fantastic acting, lighting, production design and direction; for genre geeks it intelligently updates a classic to become one itself, delivering on mounting terror based in the potential of the core scientific concept. An essential of the geek film library, it is also a quintessential SF-horror film, arguably never bettered since. **GM**

The Fly and The Fly II are available on DVD from 20th Century Fox, there is also a five film collector's set of sequels.

THE FLY



BACKTALK

100 YEARS OF TANKS

IT WAS THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME IN 1916 WHERE THE WORLD FIRST DISCOVERED THE AWESOME POWER OF THE 'TANK', THE CODENAME FOR THE BRITISH ARMY'S NEW LANDSHIP. FIVE YEARS INTO WORLD OF TANKS, WARGAMING HAS SOME GREAT CONTENT PLANNED FOR THE CENTENARY...



In only five years Wargaming has taken its World of Tanks free to play MMO from launch to a true colossus in gaming. 110 million registrations for the PC version, seven million Xbox players, and a PlayStation4 launch in January that has already racked up two million players. That's a lot of gamers shooting at each other. In fact 75 billion shells have been fired – and counting!

With so much accurate tank data running through their servers, Wargaming also created a set of virtual reality videos in conjunction with Google late last year. If you have not experienced them yet, grab a Google Cardboard headset and take your seat as a gunner in a 1941 battle – it's an incredible experience not to miss.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first tank trundling towards the front line in the Battle of the Somme, the team at Wargaming is creating Mark I tanks. Expect to see them in-game around September. There will be special in-game events throughout the year too. We caught up with Artiom Muraska, Producer of World of Tanks, at The Tank Museum in Dorset to find out what has made the game such a hit...

So it's been five years since the launch of World of Tanks – what are the biggest innovations the game has seen in that time?

We have introduced more and more nations into the game. Right now we have eight nations and more than 400 vehicles to select from. This has been the biggest innovation for us. In the beginning we had simple vehicles driving across the map, without the possibility of falling down from hills. The movement physics was not as appealing as it is now. So the most game changing update for us has always been improvement of the physics. Lots of players have noticed the improvement as the game has developed – it was a real game changer. We keep on moving forward, improving the movement physics for our players. We are bringing more comfortable vehicle movement, more comfortable manoeuvrability. Along with this we have also introduced completely reworked sound. Most of the sounds of the tanks have been reworked. If you listened to the original game and our latest update, it's a world of difference.

What do you think is the reason for the game's incredible success

Back at the beginning, everyone was levelling. We came to the stage where we said, "stop levelling, start

battling". This created something completely new that players had not experienced before and that was what made the game succeed. We had introduced a completely new genre of military game shooter. Not the fastest shooter, but a game that was available for everyone. Whether you were a small kid or a grown up, you could do something and find your place in the battle.

Out of the 400 vehicles in World of Tanks today, which ones are your personal favourites?

That's a very hard question. Right now I am an experienced player in terms of battles. I have 26,000 battles behind me. I very often discover a new vehicle that then becomes my favourite. Let's say half of the year I am worshipping one of the vehicles, then the other half of the year I am playing really hardcore with another one. I am really enjoying playing the latest premium vehicles we have just introduced. The Chinese 59-Patton is quite interesting to play. Also the latest German tank was also quite interesting from a gameplay perspective.

I see that Wargaming is a sponsor of The Tank Museum here at Bovington. How does this relationship help in the development of the game?

Once we had established this connection with The Tank Museum they helped us a lot. There's a huge booth here for the Fury movie with Brad Pitt, when the movie launched two years ago we created a huge campaign. Wargaming worked together with Sony and The Tank Museum. Two vehicles in the movie came from The Tank Museum – the Fury Sherman and Tiger 131 tanks. We then recreated these vehicles in the game. It was a great collaboration between all of us – The Tank Museum supplied the Fury tank, Sony put it in the Fury movie, we published the vehicle that was in the movie in the game. There's now an awesome permanent exhibition of this collaboration at The Tank Museum, uniting the companies.

Do you go so far as to measure the tanks for the 3D models in-game?

Yes, from time to time we come to the museum and measure vehicles. We also record sounds – the new sounds in the latest update are the actual recordings from The Tank Museum. This kind of cooperation really helps us.

You're working with The Tank Museum on the 100 Years of Tanks commemoration. What can we expect to see



THE TANK MUSEUM

from this in the game?

So, right now we do have ideas of how to support this activity, not only on social media but also in-game, across different platforms. But I can't share all of those ideas right now, we're definitely working on introducing something into the game. The 100 Years Of Tanks is a really good opportunity for us to do something in the game.

Tell us more about the Wargaming League that World of Tanks players have been competing in.

Right now this is very much high-end content for competitive play. For a new player who is just starting playing this game, there are so many directions you can go and play. Just starting out you can join a Clan, this gives you an opportunity to play in different modes like Clan Wars and Team Battles. If you are really interested in the Team Battles and you want to really master your Team Battle skills, this is where the WG League is a good opportunity for those players. It's top skill players competing on the highest level, it's really challenging for all World of Tanks gamers.

World of Tanks is available on PC, 360, Xbox One and has just launched on PlayStation4. Check out Wargaming's VR tank videos at littlstar.com/world-of-tanks



“THE TANK MUSEUM SUPPLIED THE FURY TANK, SONY PUT IT IN THE FURY MOVIE, WE PUBLISHED THE VEHICLE THAT WAS IN THE MOVIE IN THE GAME”



SCORE

0

TIME 0:00

RINGS 0

SONIC

THE HEDGEHOG



SONIC

x

3



[GAME OVER]

Sonic the Hedgehog

1991 // MEGA DRIVE, MASTER SYSTEM
// DEVELOPER, SONIC TEAM // PUBLISHER, SEGA

Can you believe that this year it's the 25th anniversary of the launch of SEGA's Mario beater – Sonic the Hedgehog? 23 June 1991, to be precise, was the day the 16-bit gaming world was spun off its axis by a super-charged hedgehog. SEGA's flagship Mega Drive console, known as Genesis in the States, had been around for a couple of years, but had no killer app. Over on channel Nintendo Mario was doing big business, so SEGA set their AM8 development team the task of coming up with a killer platform game,

and found a mascot for the company in the process. Renaming themselves to Sonic Team, AM8 turned a nocturnal, flea-ridden creature into a cultural icon, taking on the fat plumber at his own game.

In the game, Sonic takes on the dastardly Dr Robotnik who has gone and imprisoned all the cute animals inside robots and made off with the Chaos Emeralds. He releases them by smashing into the robots using his speed and attack spins. That's why in this final scene from the Mega Drive Sonic the Hedgehog we see the little critters scurrying around in celebration, as Sonic has just socked it to the Doc once and for all.

Expect big things from SEGA as the 23 June date rolls around. **GM**

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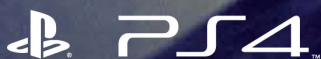
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